STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 19

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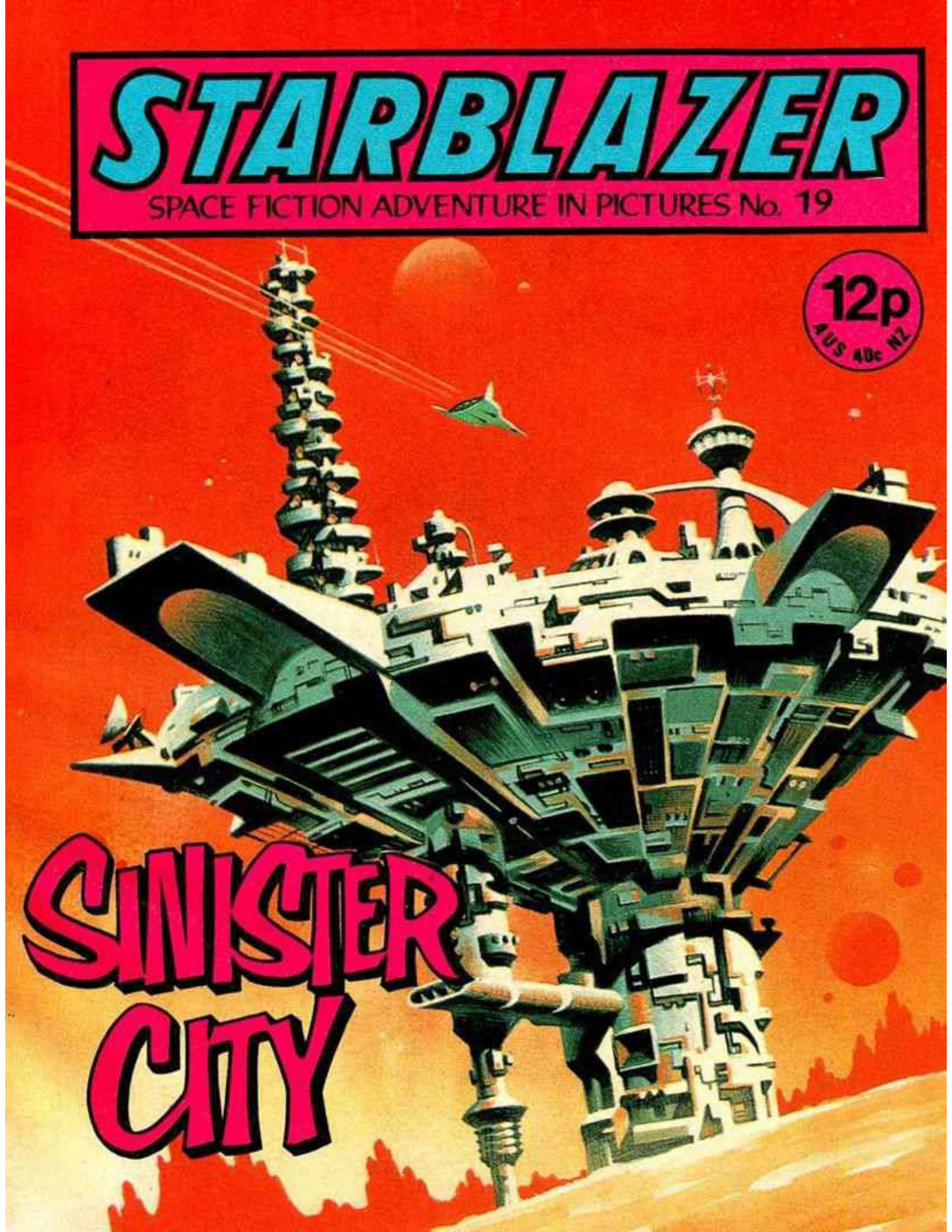
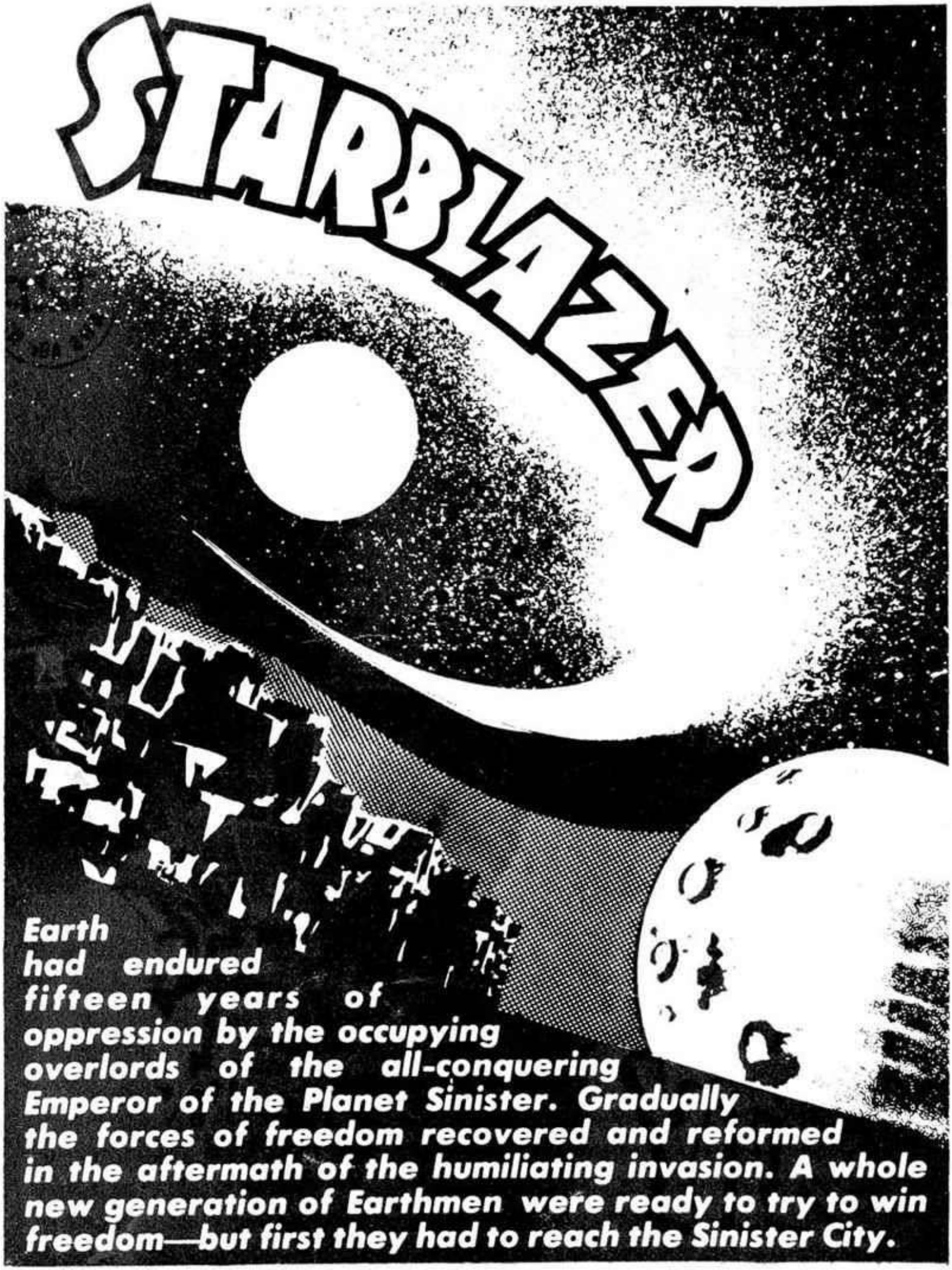


SINISTER CITY


STARBLAZER
Earth had endured fifteen years of oppression by the occupying overlords of the all-conquering Emperor of the Planet Sinister. Gradually the forces of freedom recovered and reformed in the aftermath of the humiliating invasion. A whole new generation of Earthmen were ready to try to win freedom—but first they had to reach the Sinister City.

SINISTER CITY

IN THE CONTROL ROOM, WITH AN OBSERVER, WAS REDD DEXTER, THE SON OF AN EXECUTED RESISTANCE LEADER.
THAT'S THE CLASS A ALARM. THE SINISTERS MUST BE NEARLY ON TOP OF US!

ALL PLANT AND MACHINERY SHUT DOWN TO AVOID DETECTION FROM THE VIBRATION.
WE'RE ONLY WEEKS AWAY FROM READINESS. THEY MUSTN'T FIND US NOW!

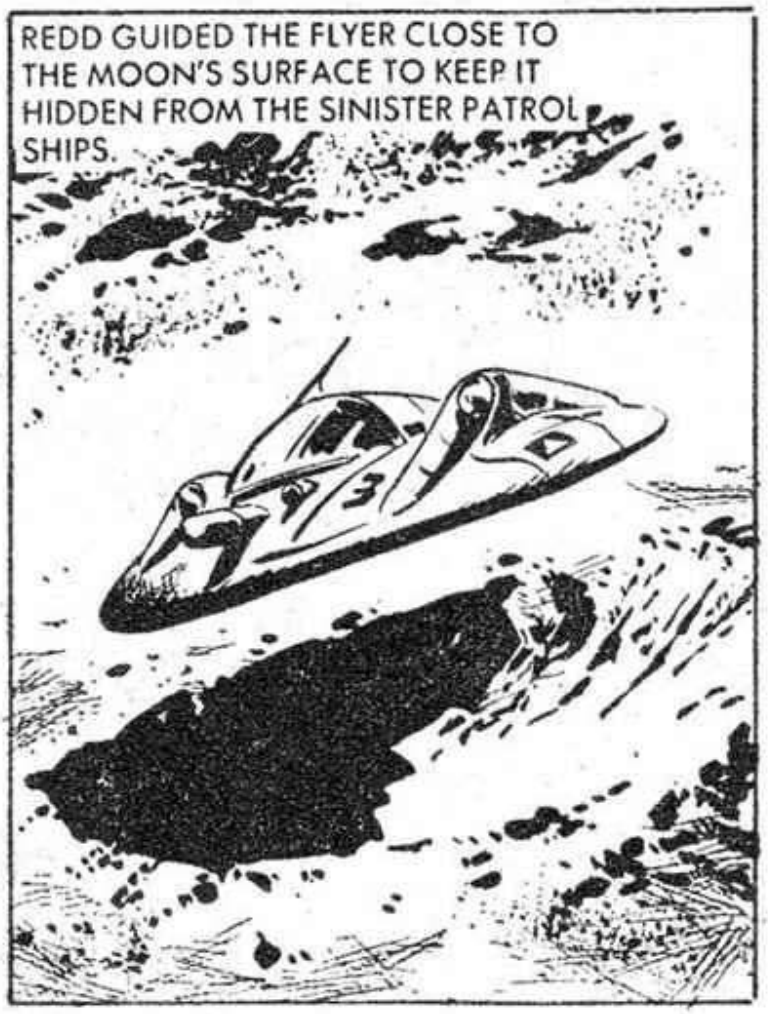
REDD REPORTED TO HIS EMERGENCY POST IN THE CONTROL ROOM.
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM, SIR?
TWO SINISTER PATROL CRAFT ON A COURSE THAT WILL BRING THEM DIRECTLY OVERHEAD.

OUR CAMOUFLAGE ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH TO FOOL A CLOSE INSPECTION.

PERMISSION TO RUN OPERATION MATADOR, SIR?
IT'S ALL WE CAN TRY. GO AHEAD.

REDD BOARDED A MOON-FLYER. A COMMERCIAL SHORT RANGE TRANSPORT.
WITH A BIT OF LUCK I'LL BE BACK SOON.

ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FORCE WAVES SHOT THE FLYER UP THE BARREL OF THE LAUNCHER.
HERE GOES.

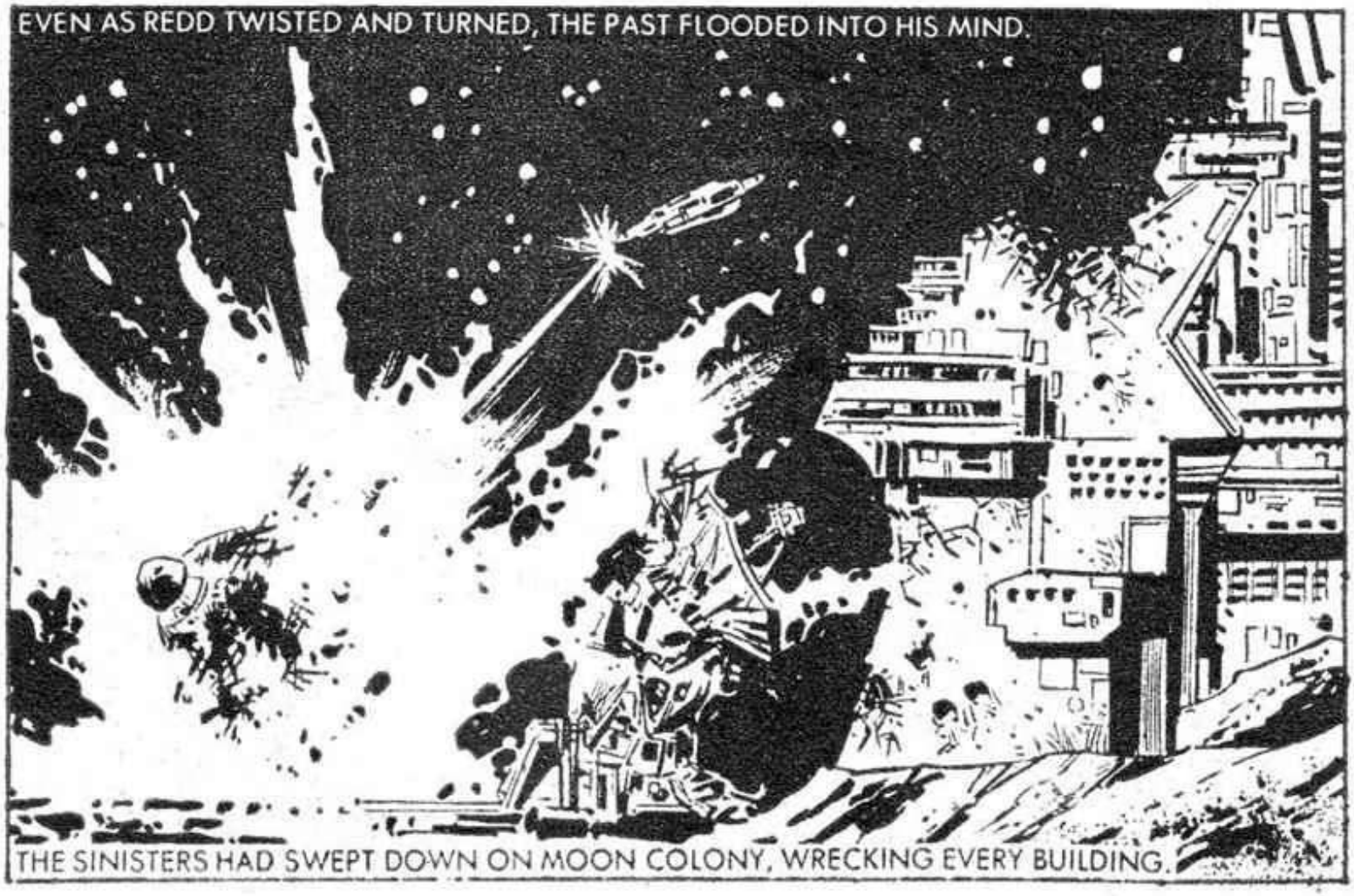

REDD GUIDED THE FLYER CLOSE TO THE MOON'S SURFACE TO KEEP IT HIDDEN FROM THE SINISTER PATROL SHIPS.

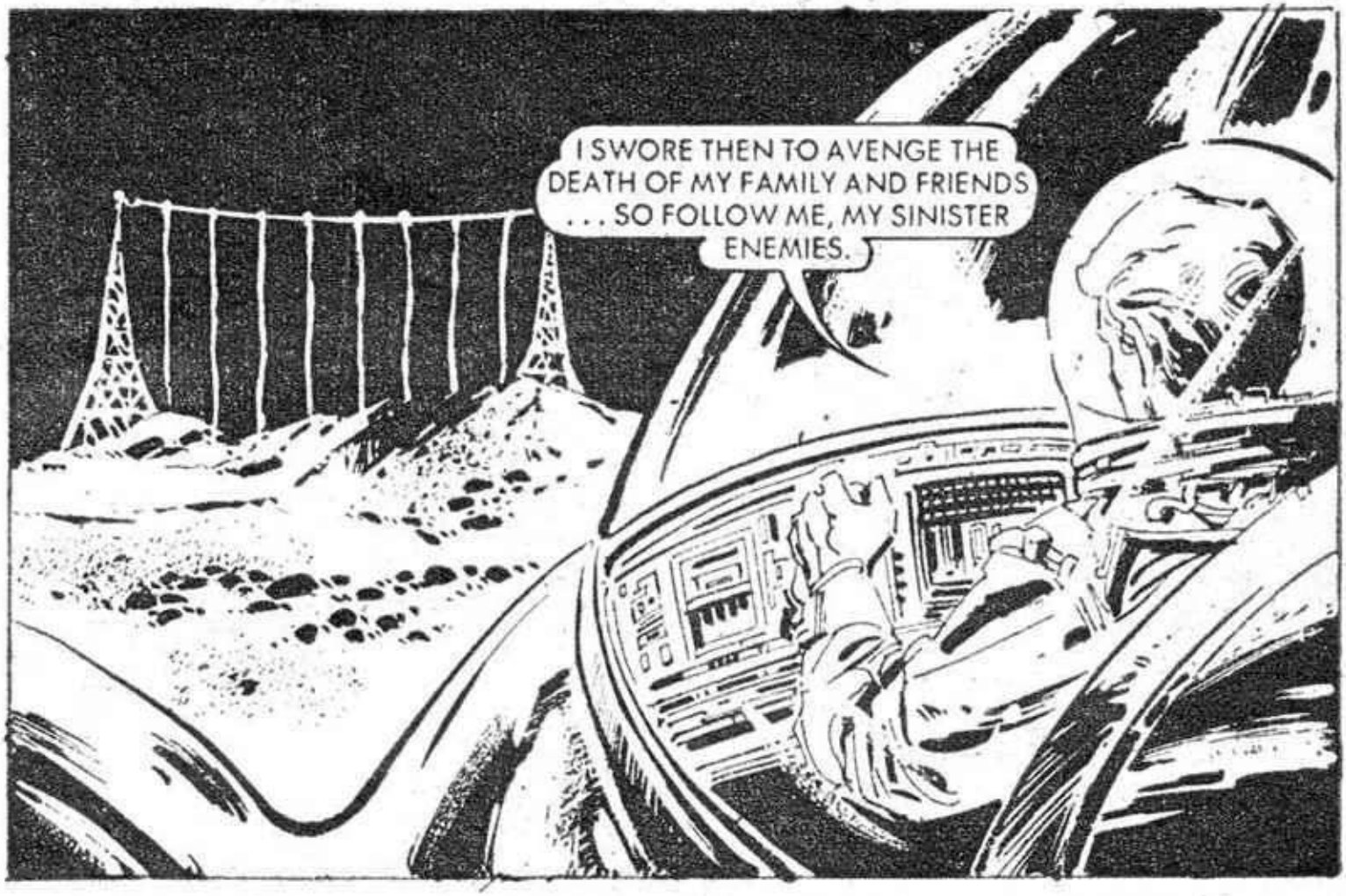
ONCE AWAY FROM THE IMMEDIATE AREA OF THE SECRET BASE, REDD COMMENCED OPERATION MATADOR BY FIRING TWO FLARES.

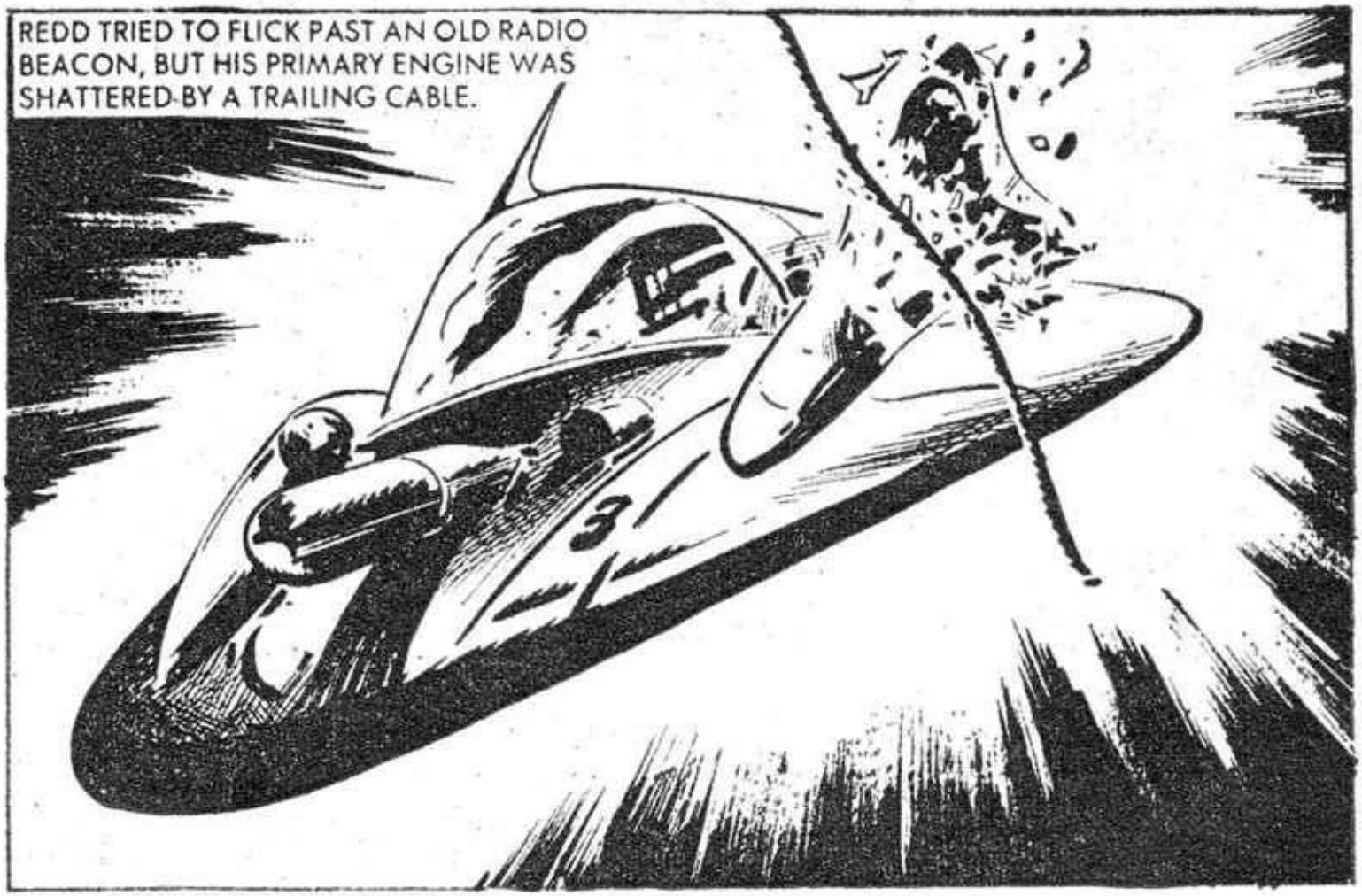
WHAT FLARE-LIGHTS ARE THOSE?
THEY COME FROM A TERRAN CRAFT OF SOME KIND, COMMANDER!

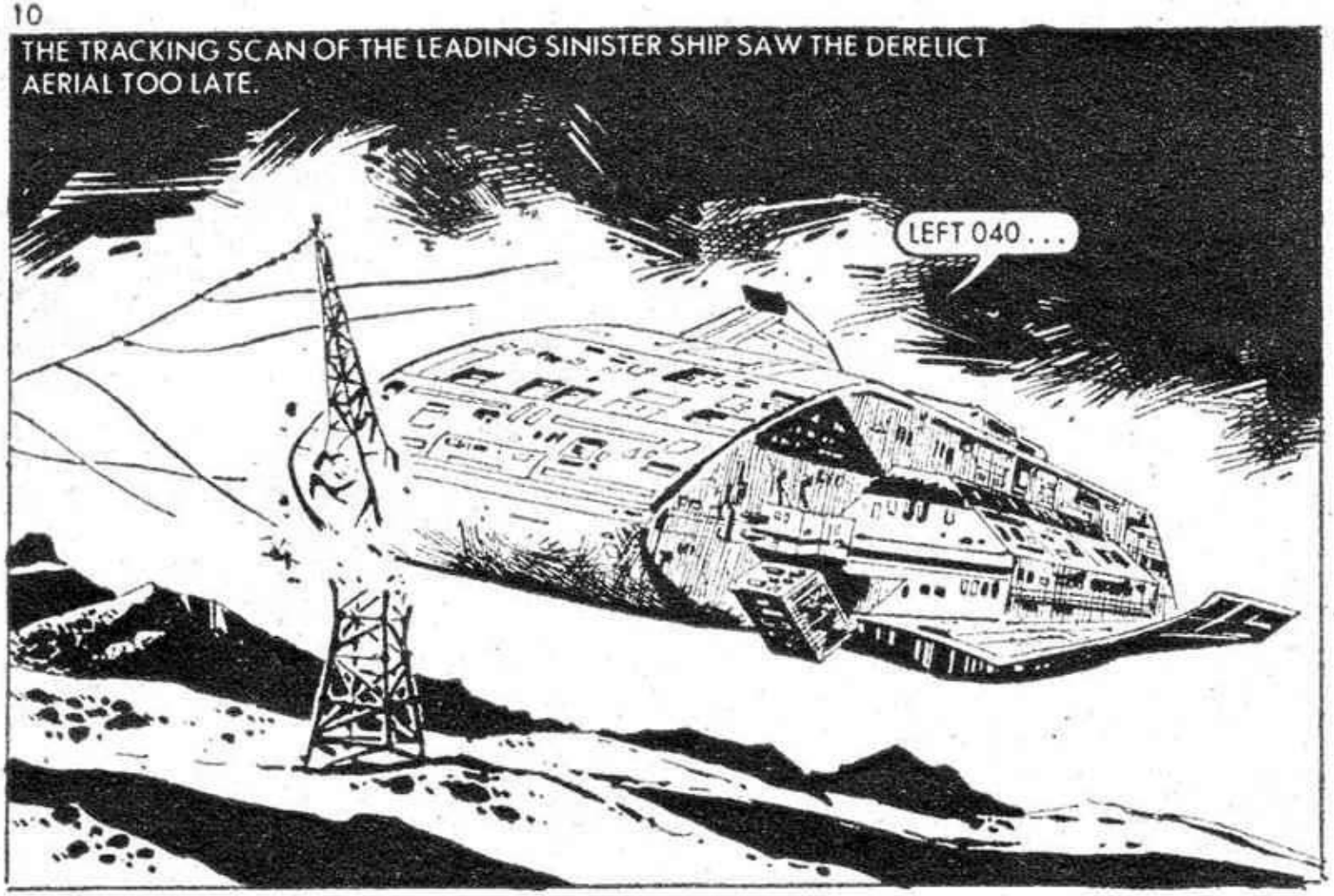
USE THE TERRAN BANDIT FOR TARGET PRACTICE!

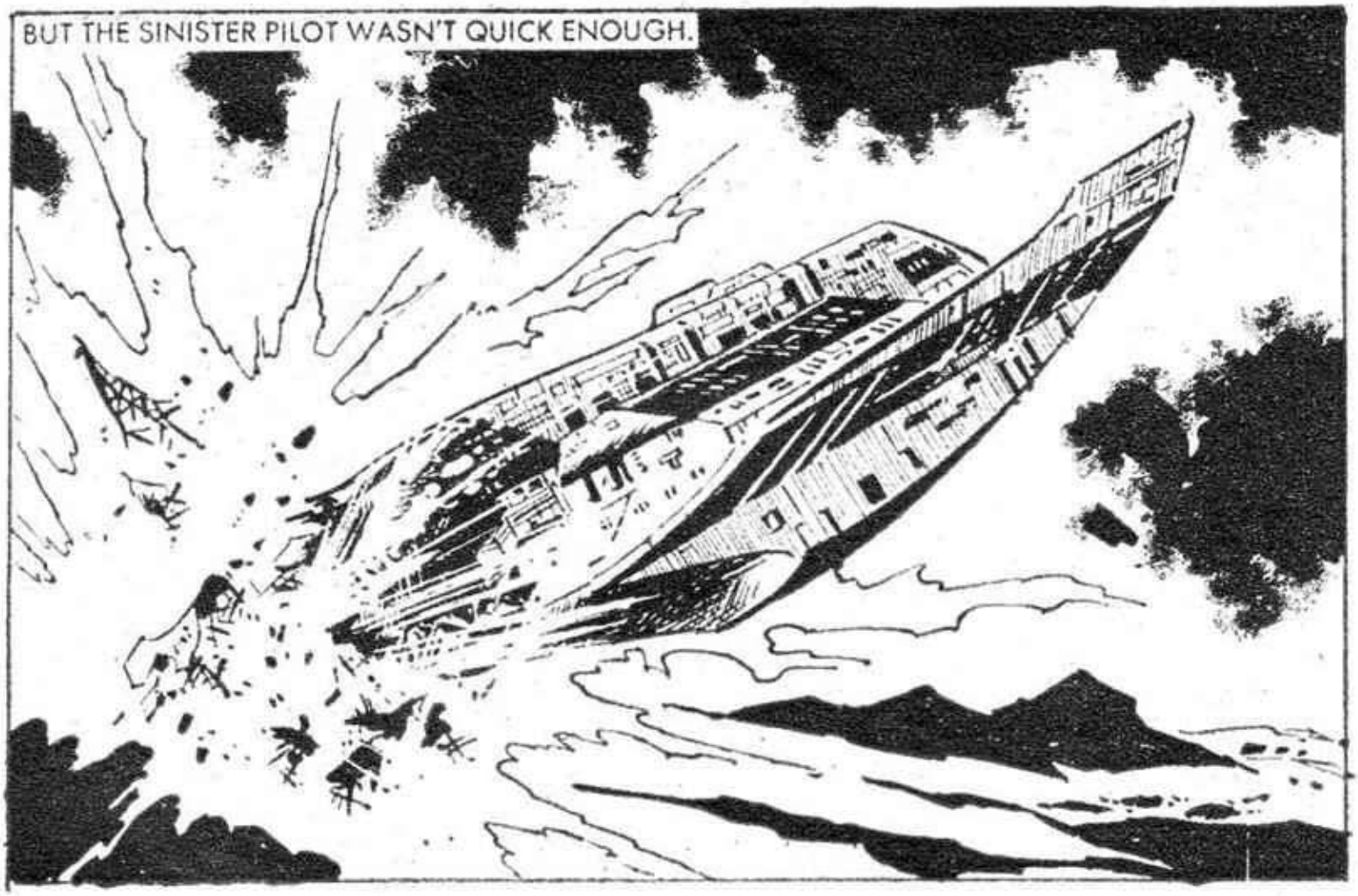
ONLY REDD'S SUPERIOR SKILL KEPT HIM OUT OF TROUBLE.
I CAN'T LET FIFTEEN YEARS OF WORK GO TO WASTE.


EVEN AS REDD TWISTED AND TURNED, THE PAST FLOODED INTO HIS MIND.
THE SINISTERS HAD SWEPT DOWN ON MOON COLONY, WRECKING EVERY BUILDING.


I SWORE THEN TO AVENGE THE DEATH OF MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS . . . SO FOLLOW ME, MY SINISTER ENEMIES.

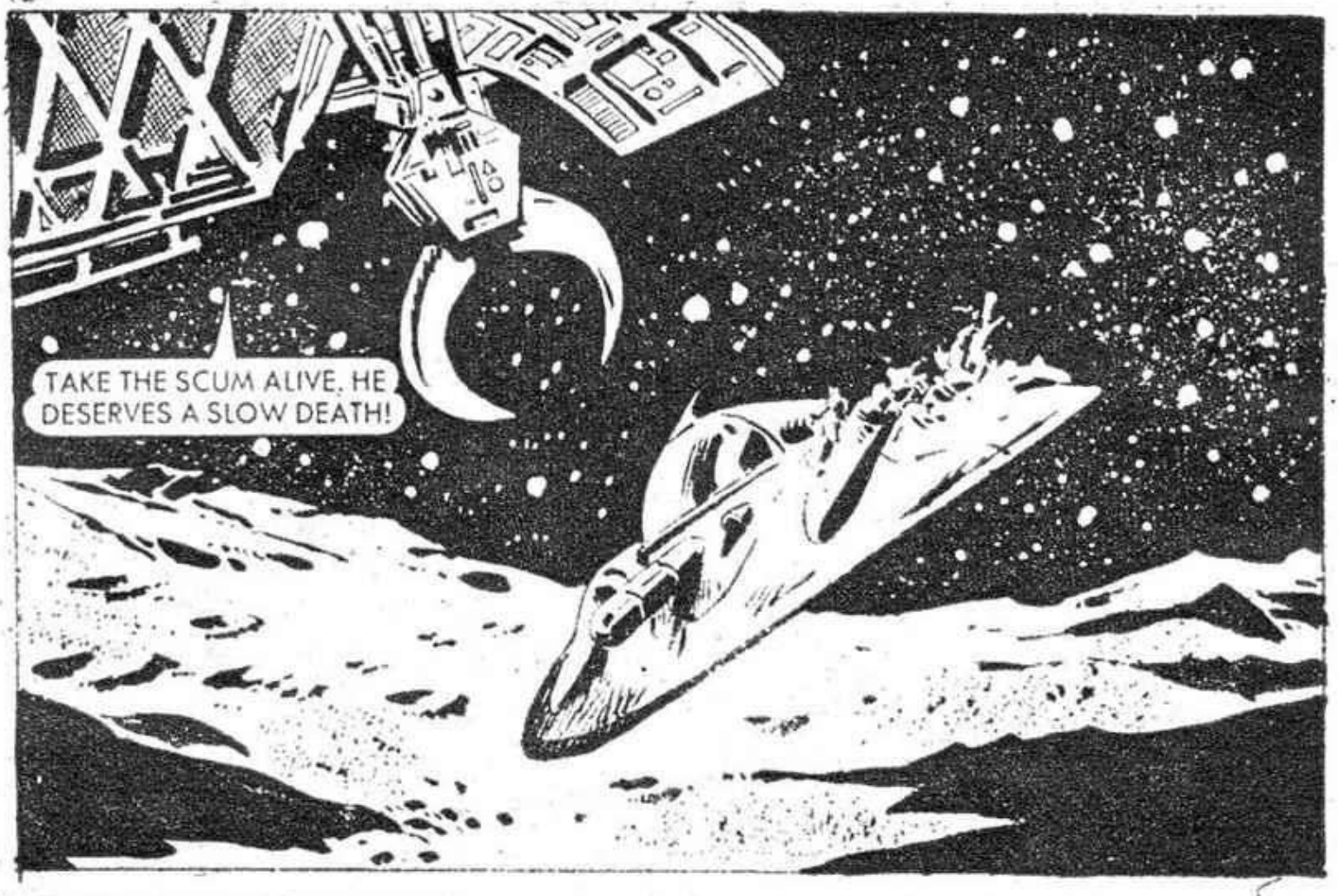

REDD TRIED TO FLICK PAST AN OLD RADIO BEACON, BUT HIS PRIMARY ENGINE WAS SHATTERED BY A TRAILING CABLE.


THE TRACKING SCAN OF THE LEADING SINISTER SHIP SAW THE DERELICT AERIAL TOO LATE.
LEFT 040 . . .

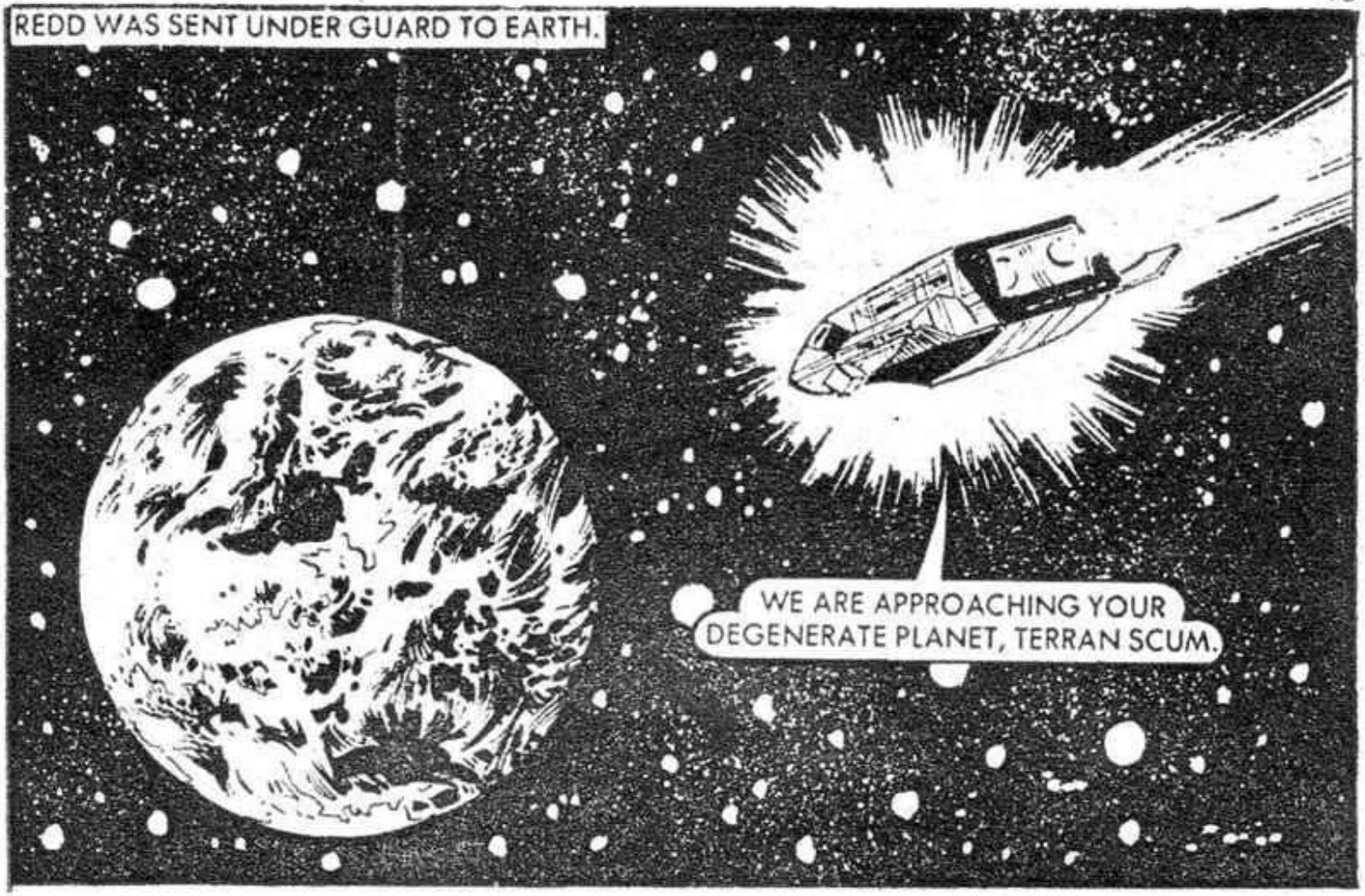

BUT THE SINISTER PILOT WASN'T QUICK ENOUGH.

THE SECOND SHIP CLOSED IN.
MAINTAIN PURSUIT!

I HAVE THE TERRAN BANDIT READY FOR DESTRUCTION.
NO. HOLD YOUR FIRE.


TAKE THE SCUM ALIVE. HE DESERVES A SLOW DEATH!

THE WHOLE ACTION HAD BEEN WATCHED BY REDD'S COLLEAGUES.
WE'RE SAFE AND REDD'S STILL ALIVE!
AS A PRISONER OF THE SINISTERS, HE IS AS GOOD AS DEAD.


REDD WAS SENT UNDER GUARD TO EARTH.
WE ARE APPROACHING YOUR DEGENERATE PLANET, TERRAN SCUM.

MY DEGENERATE PLANET WILL FINISH THE SINISTERS ONE DAY.

THE SINISTER EMPEROR HAD LEFT EARTH WITH NO RESOURCES FOR REBUILDING THE CITIES RAVAGED BY THE INVASION.

OUR EMPEROR HAS BUT TO RETURN WITH HIS BATTLE FLEET FROM SINISTER AND EVEN YOUR RUINS WOULD BE RAZED!

REDD WAS TAKEN BEFORE THE SINISTER AMBASSADOR.

SUMMON THE GOVERNOR OF THESE TERRANS HERE.

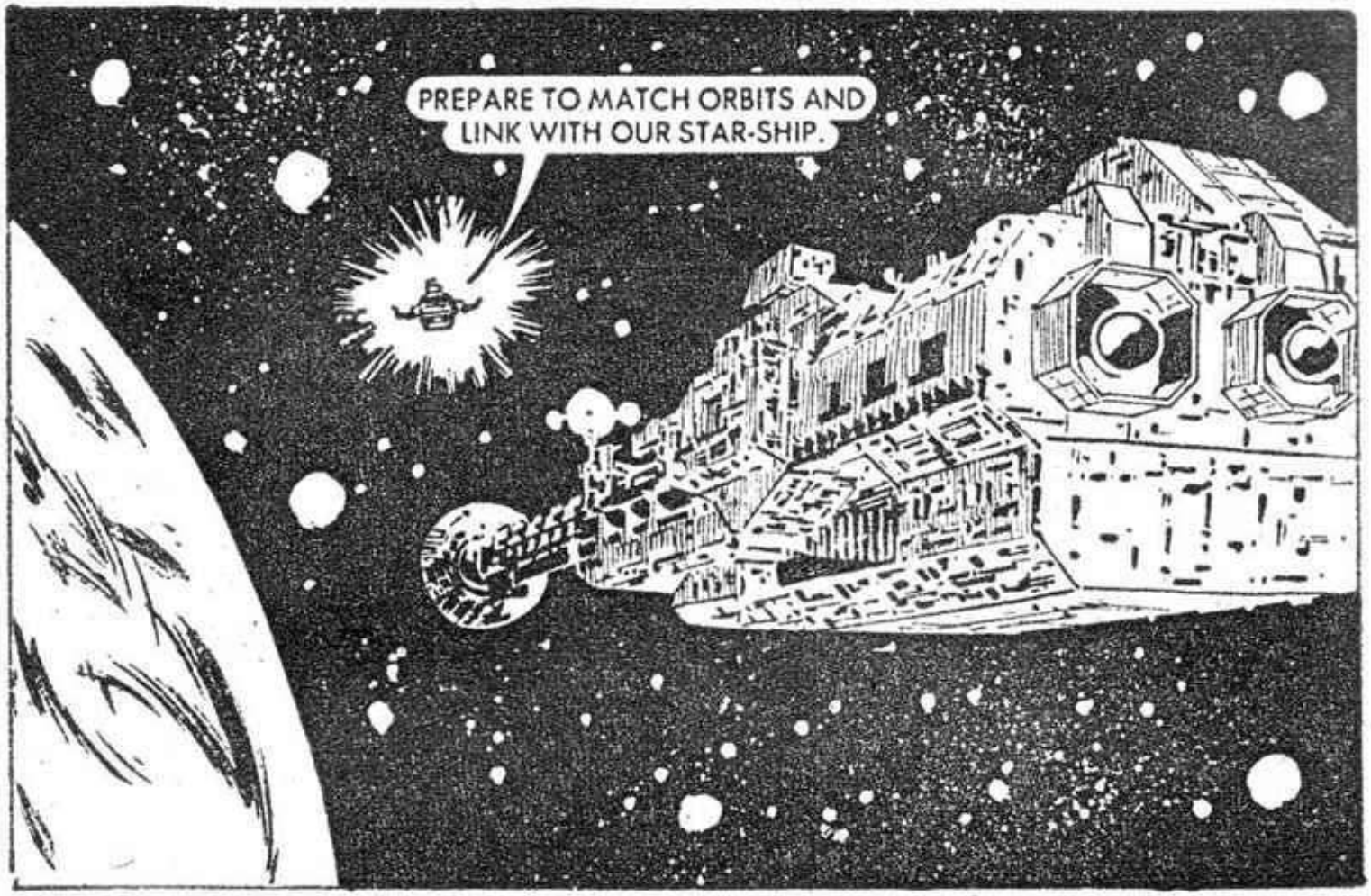
EARTH'S GOVERNOR ARRIVED.
WE MERCIFULLY ALLOWED THE HUMAN RACE TO SURVIVE BECAUSE YOU PLEDGED ALLEGIANCE TO US. WHY HAVE WE BEEN ATTACKED?
HE IS NOT ONE OF US.

HE IS A MOON REBEL! I SHALL ARRANGE FOR HIM TO BE RE-EDUCATED.
NO!

HE AND OTHERS EQUAL TO THE NUMBER OF THE SHIP'S CREW HE KILLED, WILL BE TRANSPORTED TO SINISTER FOR THE EMPEROR HIMSELF TO PUNISH. THAT IS THE ORDER.

NO EARTHMAN TAKEN TO THE HOME PLANET OF THE SINISTERS WAS EVER SEEN AGAIN IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

THE SHUTTLE CRAFT HEADED FOR RENDEZVOUS WITH A DEEP SPACE GALACTIC STAR SHIP.


PREPARE TO MATCH ORBITS AND LINK WITH OUR STAR-SHIP.

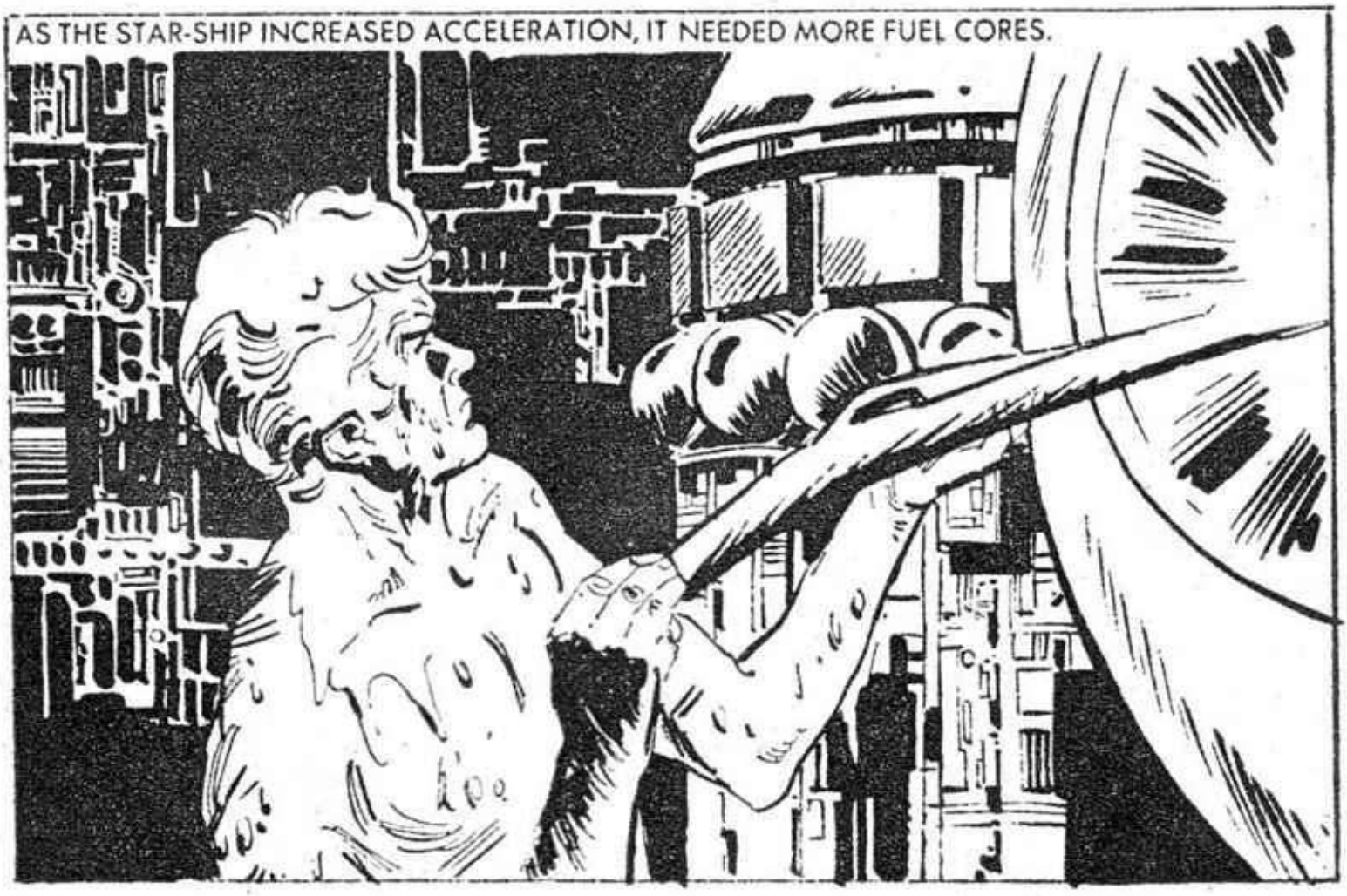
THE CAPTAIN OF THE SINISTER STAR-SHIP SUPERVISED TRANSHIPMENT.
WHAT PUNY SCUM YOU TERRANS ARE. YOUR RESISTANCE IS FUTILE.
WE'LL SEE!

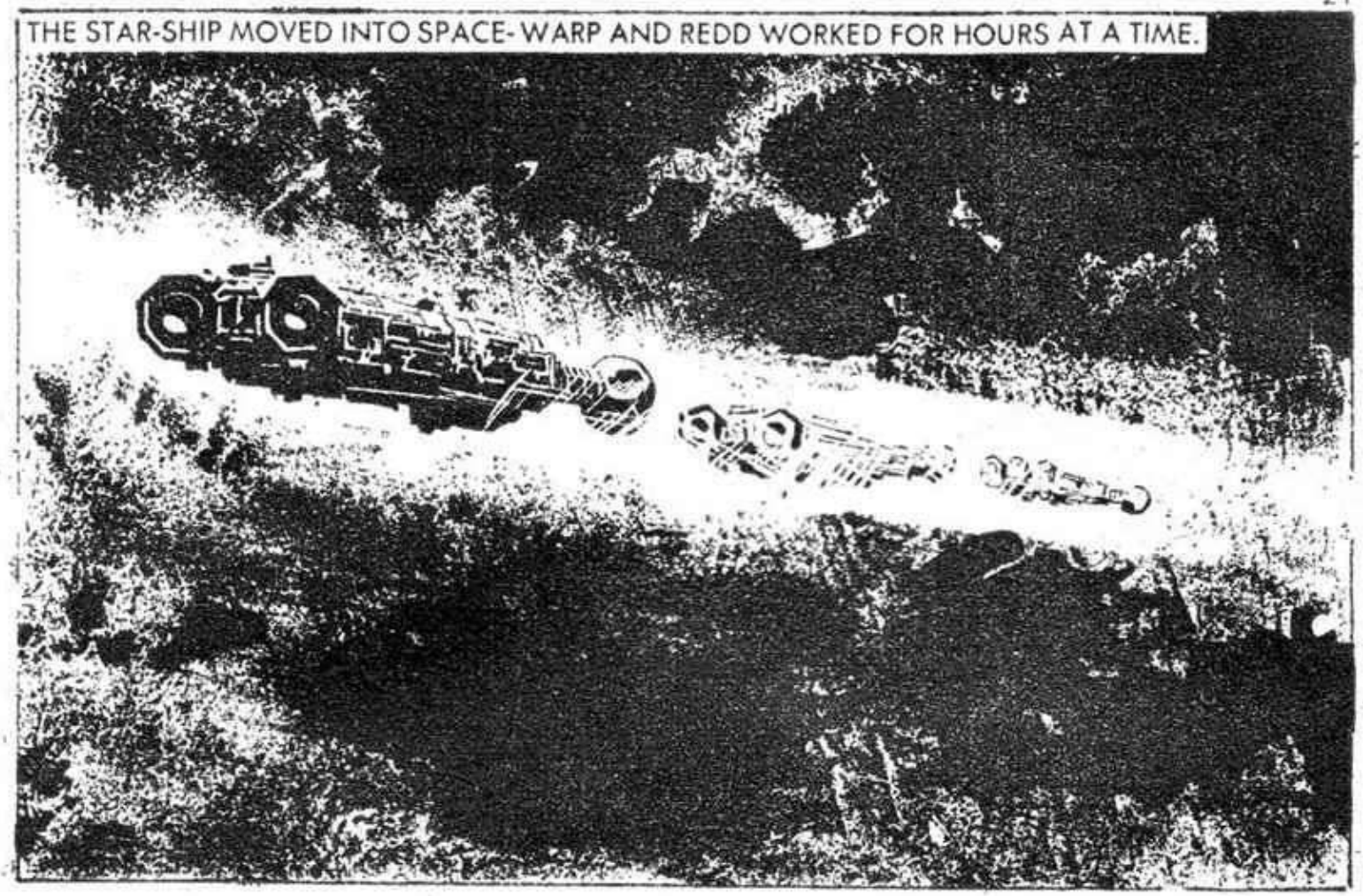
YOU ARE AN IMPERTINENT DOG.

LOOK! NO GRAVITY BOOTS!
W-WHAT?

THAT MIGHT IMPROVE YOUR LOOKS.
REDD WAS SUBDUED BY TWO GUARDS.
NOW I REALLY WILL TEAR YOU APART!
HE IS THE EMPEROR'S PRISONER. ONLY HE CAN ORDER DEATH.
PUT HIM IN THE STAR DRIVE CHAMBER. MAKE HIM DO MACHINE'S WORK!

REDD WAS SHOWN HIS TASK.
THIS NORMALLY FEEDS THE DRIVE WITH HOT FUEL CORES. YOU WILL DO ITS WORK OR SUFFER THE LASER GOAD.

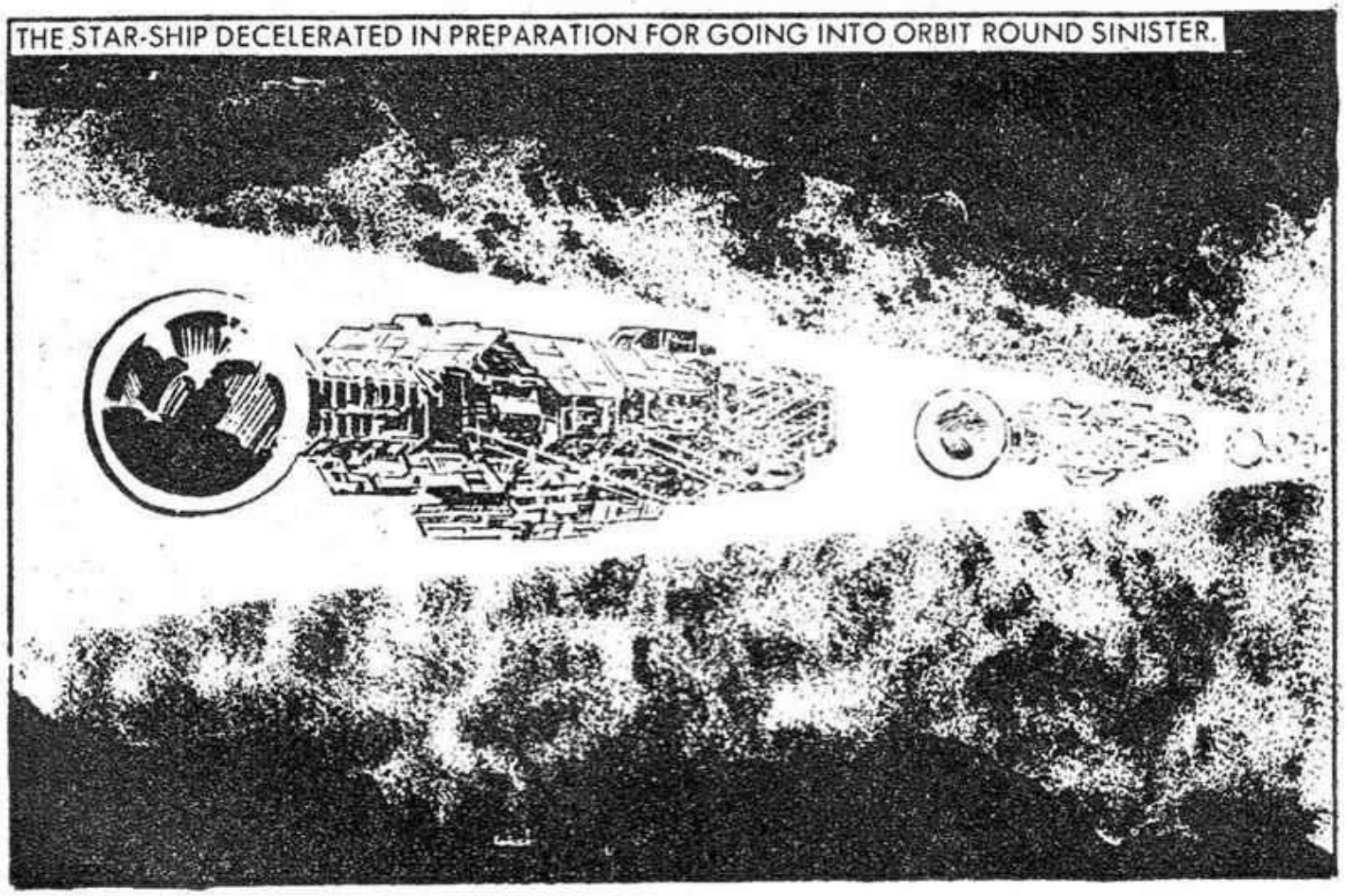

AS THE STAR-SHIP INCREASED ACCELERATION, IT NEEDED MORE FUEL CORES.

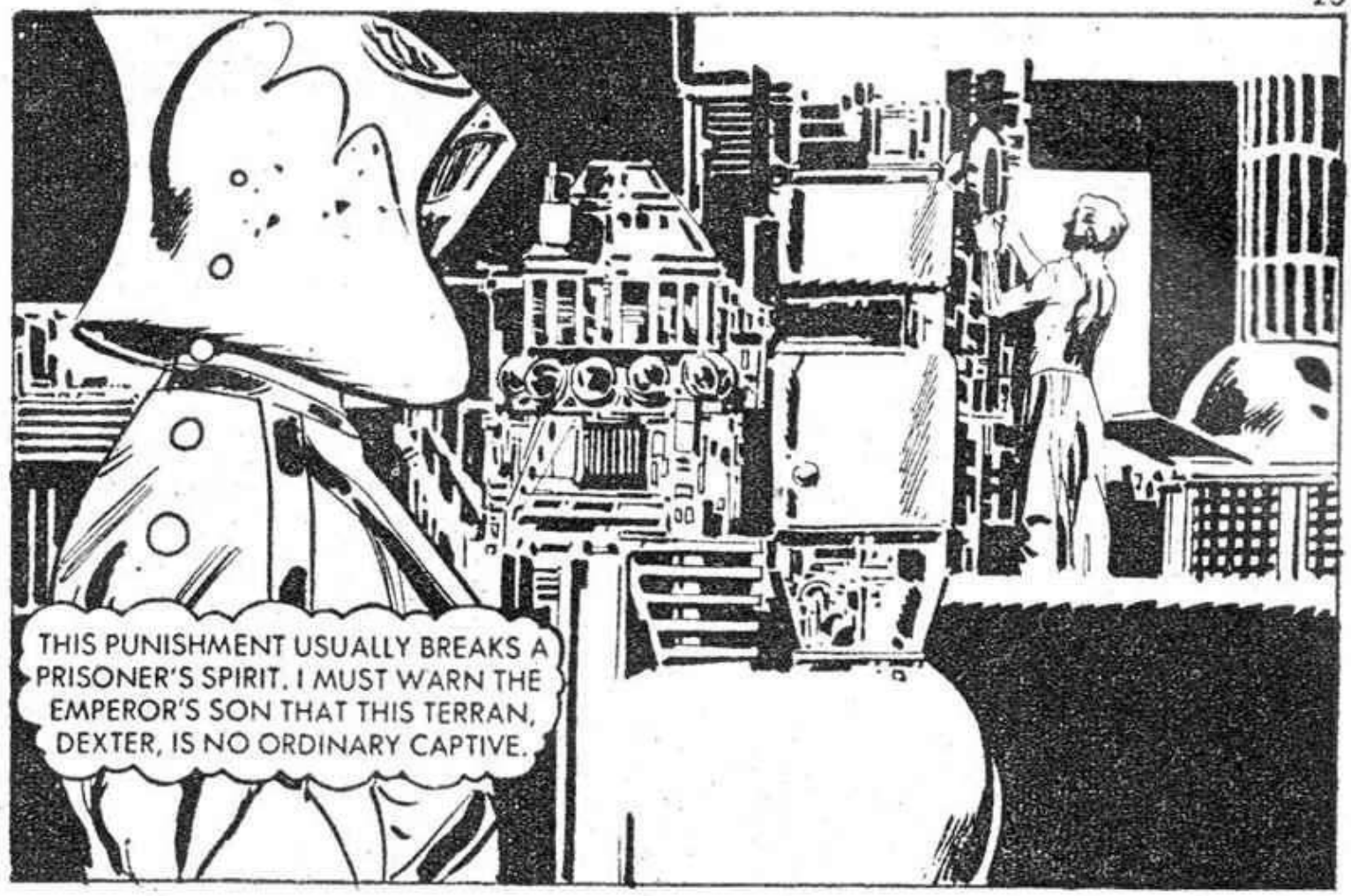

THE STAR-SHIP MOVED INTO SPACE-WARP AND REDD WORKED FOR HOURS AT A TIME.

DURING ONE OF REDD'S INFREQUENT RESTS.
HERE'S SOMETHING TO EAT.
LEAVE IT FOR LATER.

EAT! OR YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT TO SINISTER. ANYWAY, WE NEED YOU ALIVE.
WHY ME?

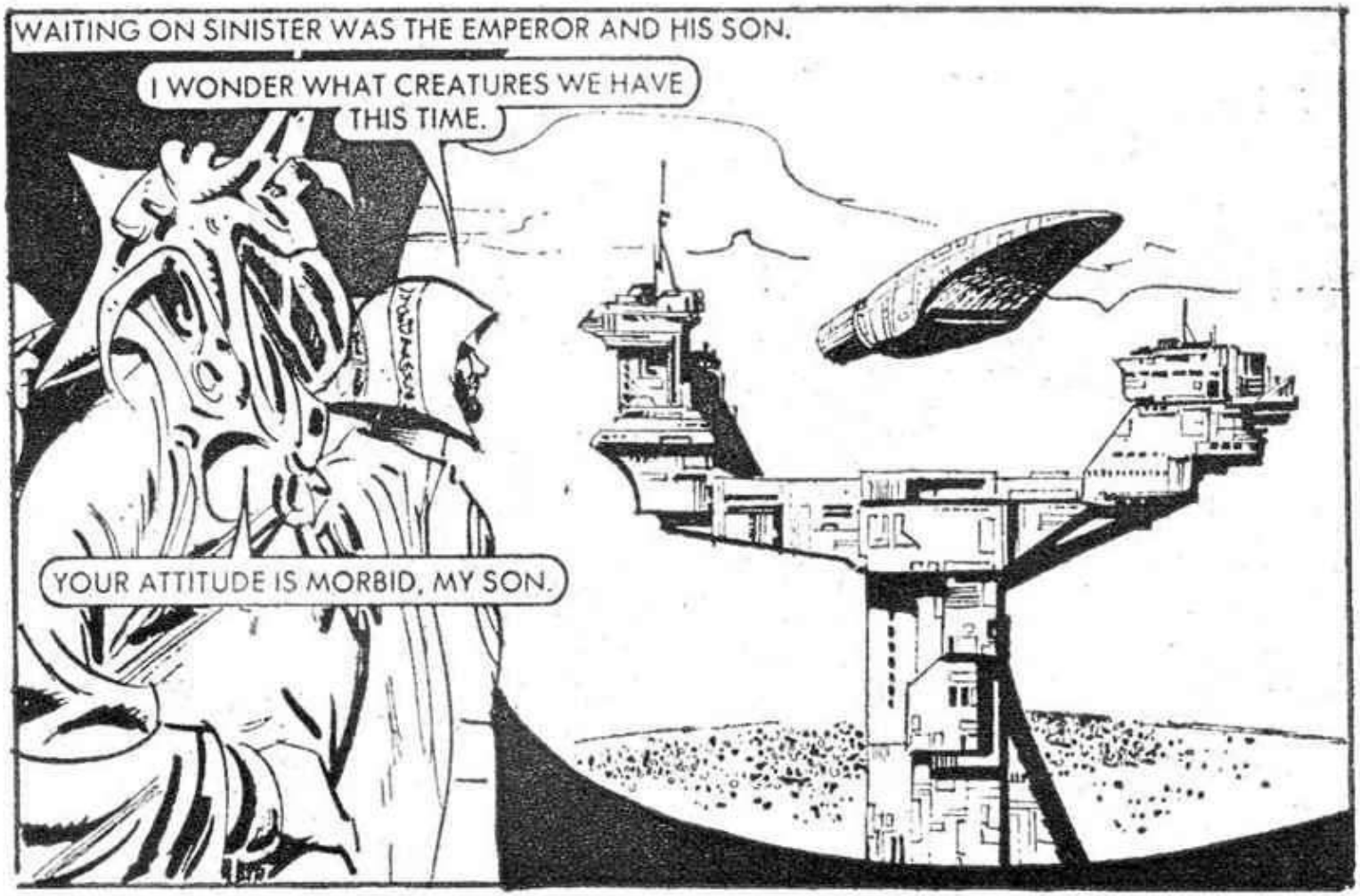
MY NAME IS VERNON. I WAS CAUGHT SABOTAGING SINISTER PROPERTY SO MY FATE IS DEATH ON SINISTER. I ALSO KNOW THAT YOU ARE A MOON REBEL. TOGETHER, I THINK WE CAN ESCAPE AND CONTINUE OUR FIGHT.


THE STAR-SHIP DECELERATED IN PREPARATION FOR GOING INTO ORBIT ROUND SINISTER.

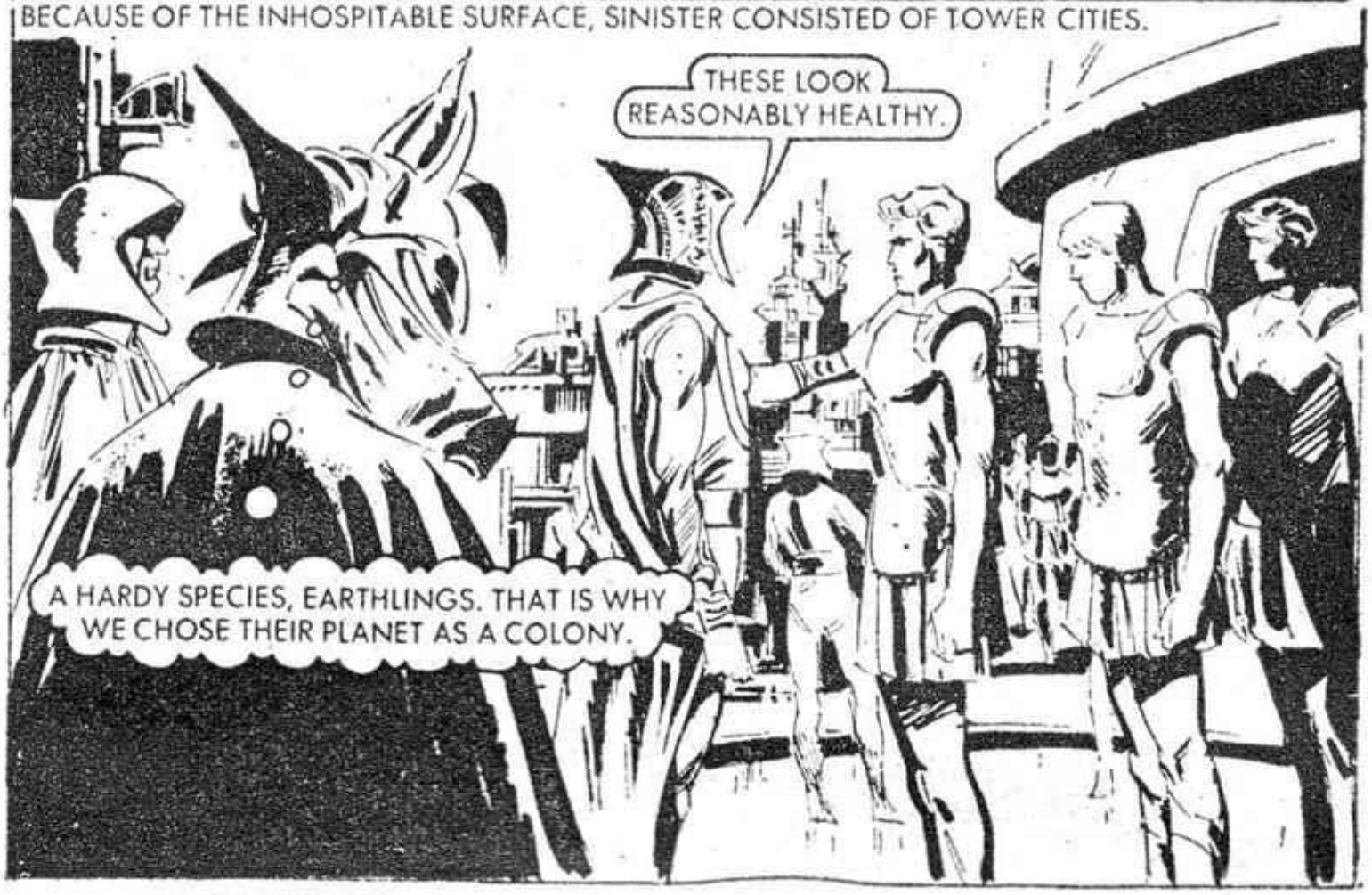

THIS PUNISHMENT USUALLY BREAKS A PRISONER'S SPIRIT. I MUST WARN THE EMPEROR'S SON THAT THIS TERRAN, DEXTER, IS NO ORDINARY CAPTIVE.

GET CLEANED UP! OUR EMPEROR DOESN'T LIKE HIS VICTIMS TO BE DIRTY WHEN THEY DIE.

IT'S A PITY THE OUTFIT DOESN'T COME COMPLETE WITH BROADSWORD.
I HAVE SOME DEVICES HIDDEN. WE WON'T GO ENTIRELY NAKED INTO THE FRAY.


WAITING ON SINISTER WAS THE EMPEROR AND HIS SON.
I WONDER WHAT CREATURES WE HAVE THIS TIME.
YOUR ATTITUDE IS MORBID, MY SON.

BECAUSE OF THE INHOSPITABLE SURFACE, SINISTER CONSISTED OF TOWER CITIES.



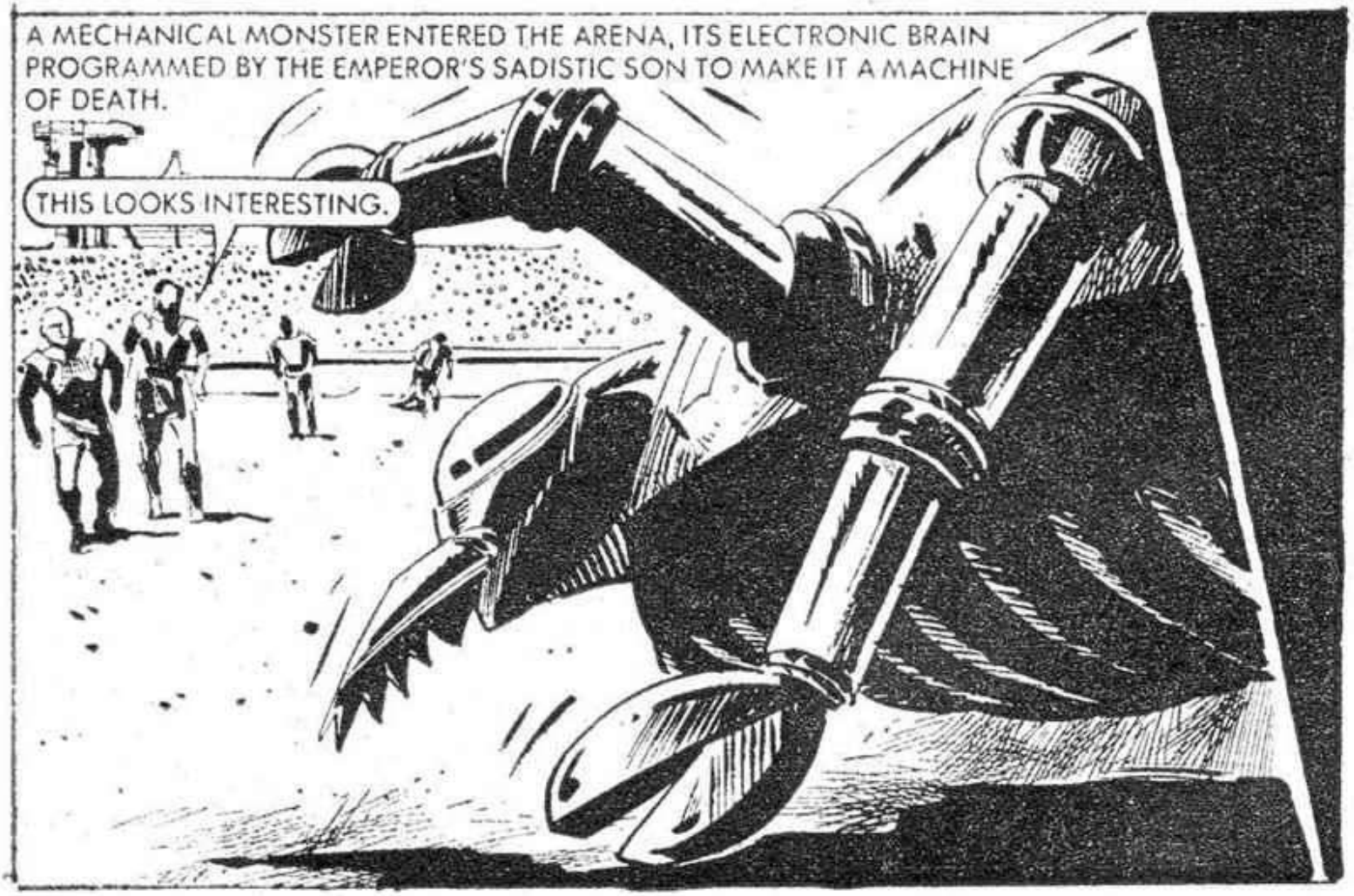
A SESSION OF THE DEATH GAMES WAS STARTED.

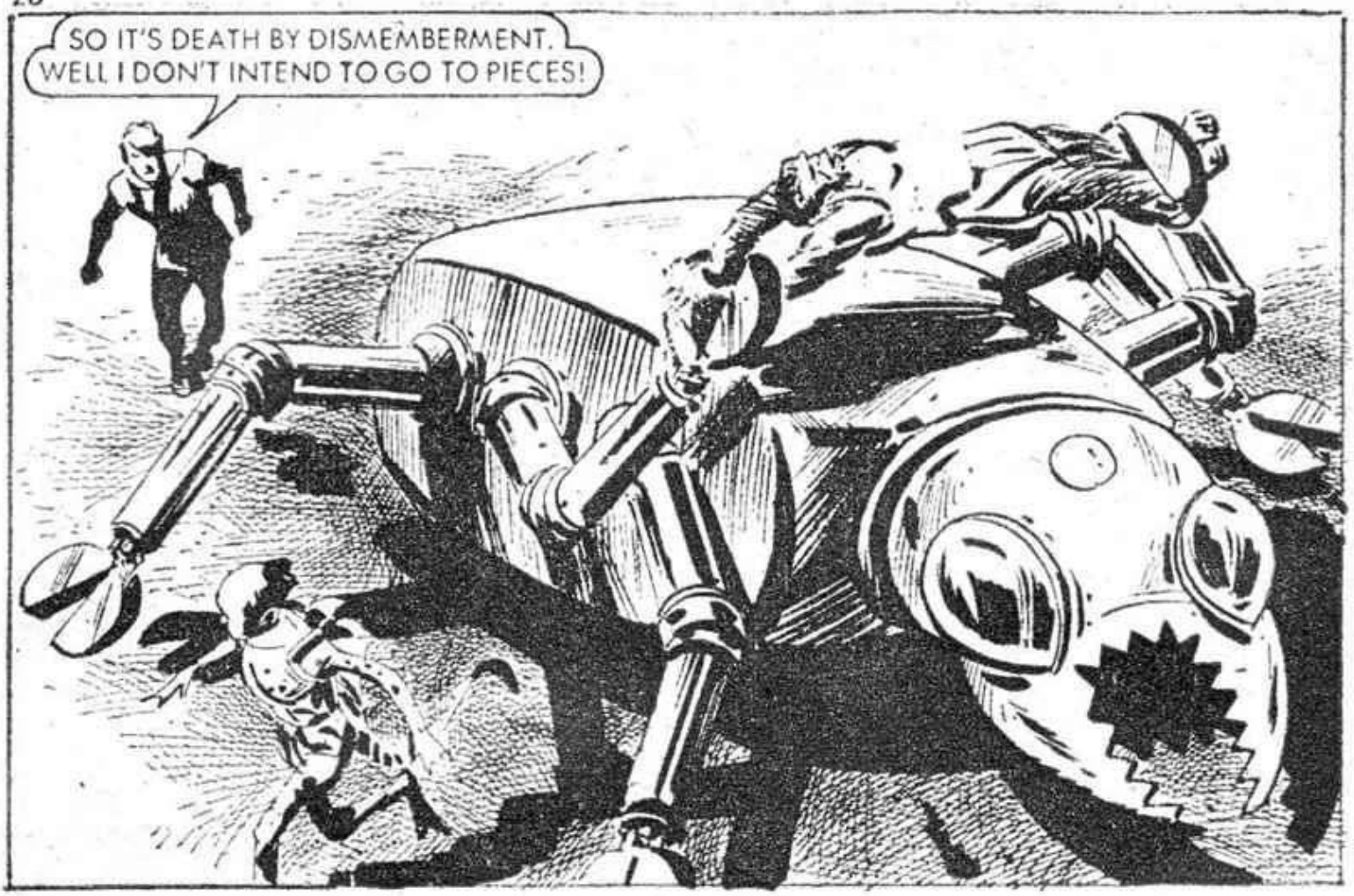
THEY TAKE PRISONERS FROM ALL OVER THE EMPIRE. WE COULD FIND USEFUL ALLIES HERE.

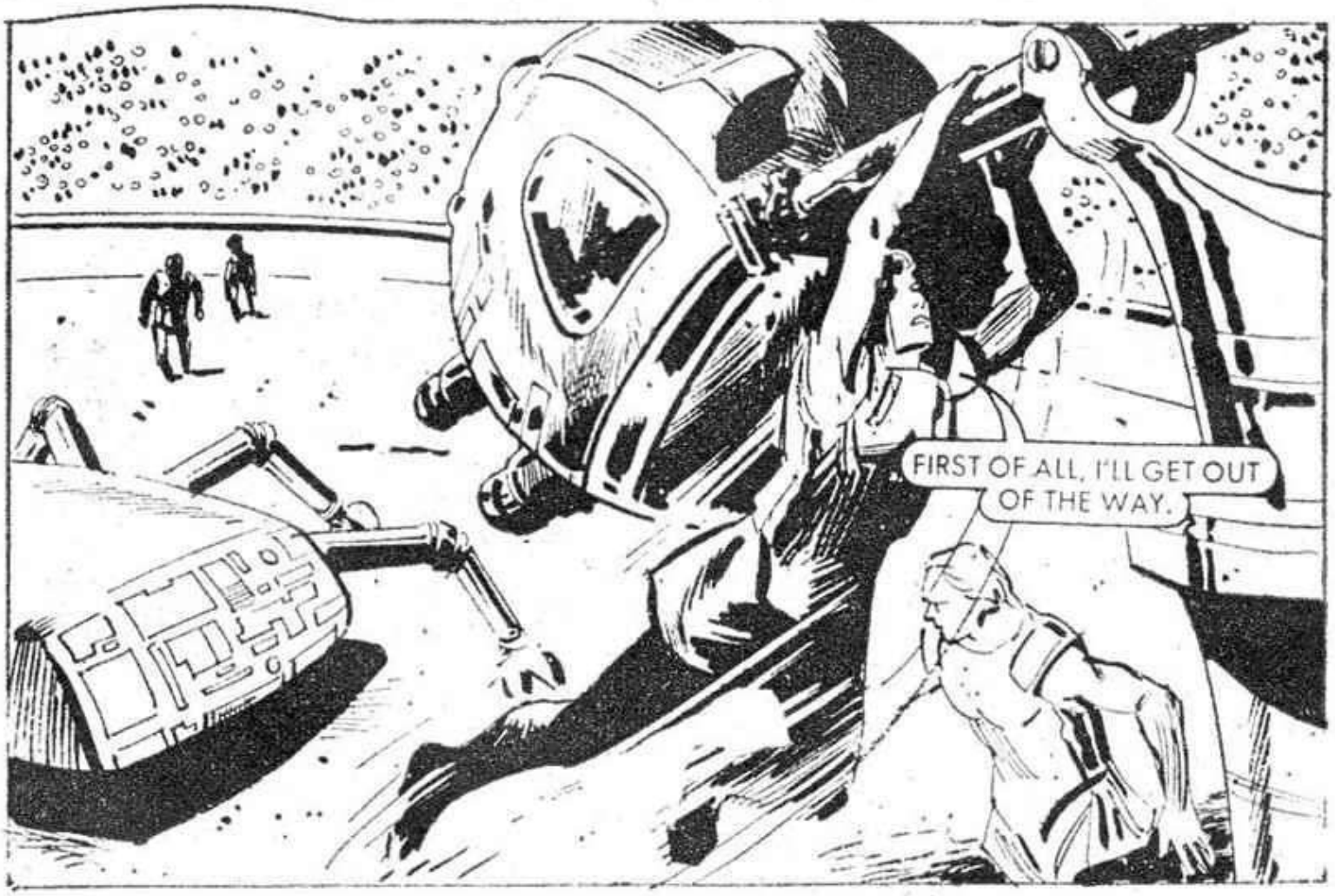
IF WE SURVIVE WHATEVER IS IN STORE FOR US!

THE DEATH GAMES WERE TRANSMITTED TO ALL CORNERS OF SINISTER.

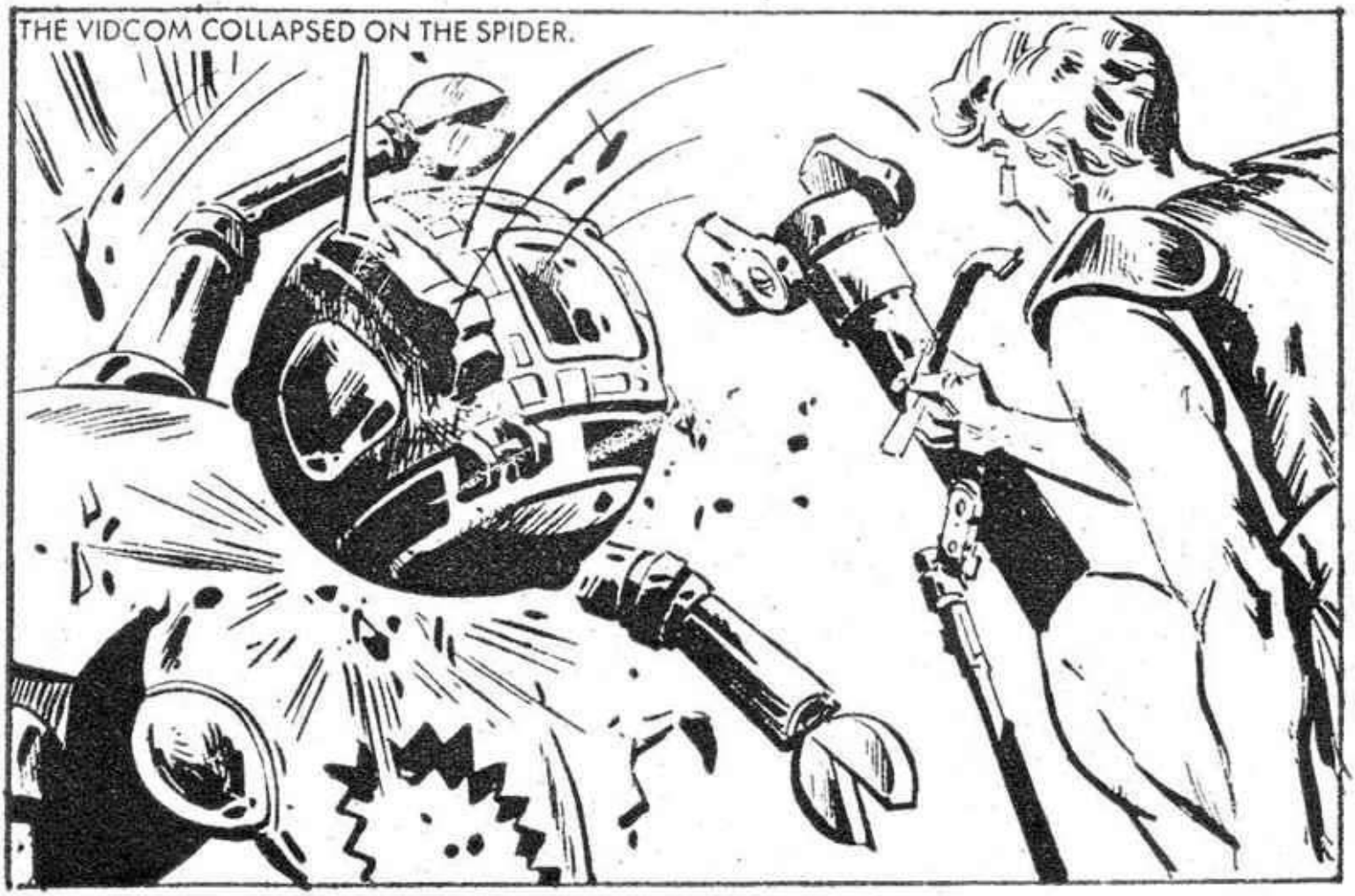
WATCH THE WEAKLINGS TREMBLE.


A MECHANICAL MONSTER ENTERED THE ARENA, ITS ELECTRONIC BRAIN PROGRAMMED BY THE EMPEROR'S SADISTIC SON TO MAKE IT A MACHINE OF DEATH.
THIS LOOKS INTERESTING.


SO IT'S DEATH BY DISMEMBERMENT. WELL I DON'T INTEND TO GO TO PIECES!


FIRST OF ALL, I'LL GET OUT OF THE WAY.

THAT'S INTERESTING! THEY USE THE SCREW THREAD IN THIS PART OF THE GALAXY AS WELL AS ON EARTH.


THE VIDCOM COLLAPSED ON THE SPIDER.

THAT'S SORTED THAT OUT. LET'S GO.

OUR MACHINES FAIL. I SHALL KILL THAT TERRAN.
HE IS THE ONE THAT DESTROYED MY SHIPS.

CLEAR THE ARENA IMMEDIATELY.

THAT TERRAN SHALL SUFFER BEYOND BELIEF.

IN YOUR LANGUAGE I AM CALLED REESOS. I OWE YOU MY LIFE EARTH-FRIEND.
WHAT'S OUR NEXT TARGET?

BACK AT THE PRISON BARRACKS REESOS EXPLAINED ESCAPE PLANS HAD BEEN MADE.

SOME OF US HAVE BEEN PRISONERS A LONG TIME AND HAVE HAD TIME TO BUILD A TUNNEL. I THINK YOU SHOULD COME WITH US.

AT NIGHTFALL.

THE TUNNEL LINKS WITH THE PALACE VENTILATION SYSTEM.

WE HAVE YET TO FIND A WAY PAST THE AUTOMATED DEATH PROJECTORS AT THE SPACEPORT'S PERIMETER.

QUIET A MOMENT, I CAN HEAR VOICES!

IT'S THE CAPTAIN OF THE STAR-SHIP AND THE EMPEROR'S SON.

. . . SO BECAUSE MY FATHER GROWS WEAK WITH AGE THE EMPIRE CRUMBLES. I SHOULD TAKE OVER NOW.
I HAVE BEEN ON TERRA. THE PEOPLE GROW BOLDER—WE SHOULD CRUSH THEM.

I WILL SUPPORT ANY MOVE YOU MAKE TO DEPOSE THE OLD EMPEROR.
OFFICERS LIKE YOU WILL LEAD MY FIGHTING HORDES WHEN I ACHIEVE ABSOLUTE POWER.
THE DESTRUCTION OF TERRA HAS PRIORITY AFTER WHAT HAPPENED IN THE ARENA TODAY.
I SAW THE BROADCAST. THE TERRAN SCUM IS DANGEROUS!

MY FRIENDS. WE MUST GO BACK AT ONCE. THERE IS AN INSPECTION.
THE PRISONERS HAD A WARNING SYSTEM TO GUARD AGAINST DISCOVERY OF THEIR ESCAPE PLANS.

THE LONGER THEY TAKE TO OVERTHROW THE EMPEROR, THE BETTER.

QUICKLY! THE GUARDS ARE HERE ASKING FOR YOU.

REDD WAS TAKEN FROM THE PRISON AND LED DEEP INTO THE SINISTER PALACE COMPLEX.
WHAT DO THEY WANT ME FOR?

THE GUARDS SECURED THEIR PRISONER IN AN UNDERGROUND CELL.
WHAT NOW?

REDD DEXTER. I SAW YOU IN THE ARENA.

THE EMPEROR REMOVED HIS HELMET.
NONE OF MY PEOPLE HAS SEEN MY FACE FOR YEARS. I HAVE HAD SURGERY TO PROLONG MY LIFE.
WHY?

I WANT TO NEGOTIATE PEACE. TO DO THAT MY SON MUST NOT SUCCEED ME . . . HE IS MAD . . . KILLING MAD.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHY DON'T YOU JUST WITHDRAW YOUR WARRIORS?

ALTHOUGH I AM EMPEROR AND RULER, MY SON CONTROLS THE MILITARY . . . I AM UNABLE TO ORDER WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT HIS APPROVAL.
HOW CAN I TRUST YOU?

YOUR FATHER WAS IN CHARGE OF MOON DEFENCES WHEN WE INVADED. AFTER HIS DEFEAT THE RULING COUNCIL EXECUTED HIM. I SWORE THEN THAT IF EVER I BECAME EMPEROR I WOULD ATTEMPT TO REDRESS THEIR EVIL DEEDS.
BUT YOUR SON HAS FOILED YOU IN YOUR WISH. I OFFER YOU MY HAND IN FRIENDSHIP FOR YOU ARE A MAN OF HONOUR.

REDD AGREED TO HELP THE EMPEROR AND ARMED WITH INFORMATION HE RETURNED TO THE CELLS.
THE DEFENCE SYSTEM OF THIS CITY IS APPARENTLY CONTROLLED FROM ONE MASTER POINT. I WANT DETAILS TO SEND BACK TO EARTH.
I KNOW THE BUILDING. IT IS NEAR OUR TUNNEL EXIT.

WHEN DARKNESS CAME THE THREE PRISONERS WENT TO THE CONTROL TOWER OF THE SINISTER DEFENCE SYSTEM.
I HAVE A SMALL VISIRECORDER. BUT I'LL NEED TIME TO GET ALL THE DETAILS.
LET'S GET UP THERE FIRST.

THE ONLY WAY TO REACH THE TOP WAS BY CLIMBING.
BE SILENT . . . THE TOWER IS GUARDED.

GET OUT OF SIGHT.

SILENTLY REESOS CREPT UP ON THE GUARD.

SWIFTLY, REESOS SWUNG TOWARDS THE GUARD AND KNOCKED THE GUN TOWARDS REDD.
W-WHAT?

THAT'LL KEEP HIM QUIET.

VERNON SYSTEMATICALLY RECORDED EVERY ITEM IN THE DEFENCE OPERATIONS CONTROL ROOM.

FINISHED, VERNON. RIGHT, LET'S GET TO THE SPACEPORT BEFORE THEY DISCOVER THE GUARD.

BUT THEY WERE OUT OF LUCK.
IT'S NO USE MY FRIENDS! THERE ARE AUTOMATIC RAY DEFENCES ROUND THE PERIMETER.
A SEARCH BEAM!

I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN!

THE SCANNERS MUST BE HEAT-SEEKING . . . SO IF I LIGHT A HIGH INTENSITY FLARE, THE SCANNERS SHOULD BE DISTRACTED FOR A SHORT TIME.
THIRTY SECONDS IS ALL WE NEED TO GET ACROSS.

START RUNNING.

BUT JUST AS THEY REACHED A SHIP.
FREEZE OR WE FIRE!
VERNON, REESOS AND I WILL CAUSE A DIVERSION. GET TO THE SHIP AND HEAD FOR EARTH.

OKAY, REESOS.

RUN VERNON! I'LL SEE YOU AT THE VICTORY PARADE!

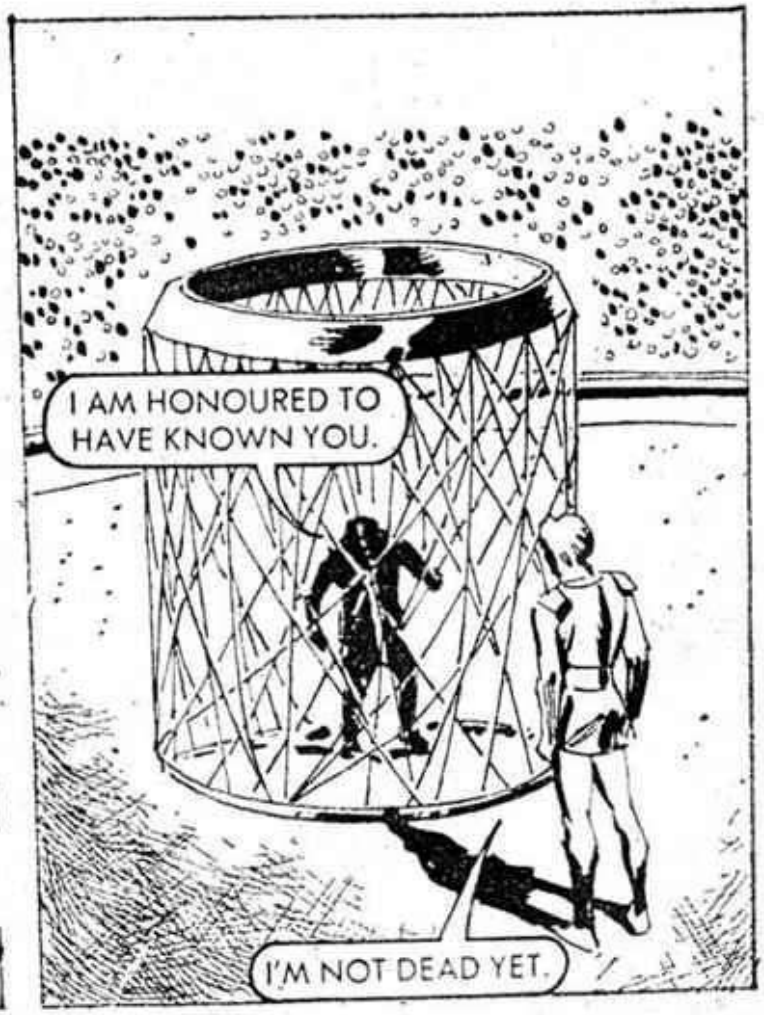
VERNON REACHED THE SHIP.
HE'S MADE IT.
THE FOOL WILL NOT GET FAR.

DOWN THERE!

VERNON BLASTED EARTHWARD.
THE FOOL! THOSE SMALL SHIPS HAVEN'T STAR FLIGHT CAPABILITY, IT WILL TAKE HIM THIRTY YEARS TO REACH EARTH.

THE GUARDS TOOK THEM TO THE EMPEROR'S SON.
I HAVE A GRUESOME DEATH PLANNED FOR YOU TWO.

IN THE CONDEMNED CELL.
THE ARENA IS PREPARED. YOU ARE GOING TO DIE.


I AM HONOURED TO HAVE KNOWN YOU.
I'M NOT DEAD YET.

THAT MAN DEFEATED YOUR MACHINE. HE SHOULD GO FREE.
HE IS A TROUBLE MAKER. I SHALL CURE THAT.

THE CONTEST BEGAN.
THE MOMENT I STOP FOR BREATH IT'LL HAVE ME.

AAAH! TOO SLOW!

REDD WAS RAISED IN THE AIR AND THE CREATURE PREPARED TO TEAR HIM APART.

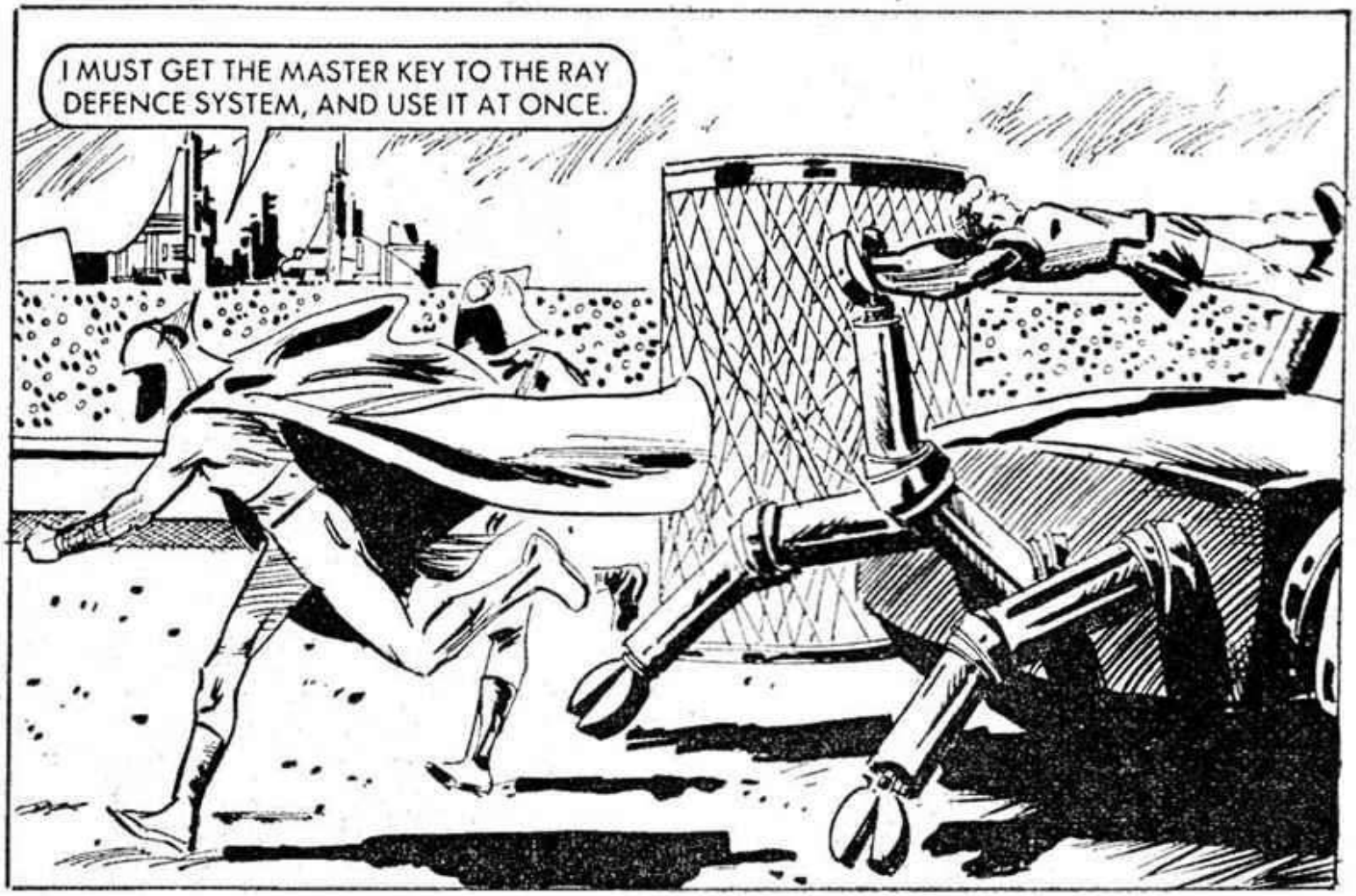
STOP! HE DESERVES TO LIVE!
THE POWER CIRCUIT! YOU INTERFERING OLD FOOL.

THE MACHINE TRUNDLED TO A HALT.
I WANTED A SON WHO WOULD BRING PEACE TO MY EMPIRE.
YOU DO NOT DESERVE TO WEAR THE HELMET OF RULING . . . I SHALL HAVE IT.

HE IS A SICK OLD MAN. KEEP HIM IN A QUIET PLACE. I WILL BE EMPEROR.

YOUR TOY HAS BROKEN AGAIN.
MY FIRST ACT AS EMPEROR WILL BE TO RID THE SINISTER EMPIRE OF ITS MOST DISRUPTIVE ELEMENT.

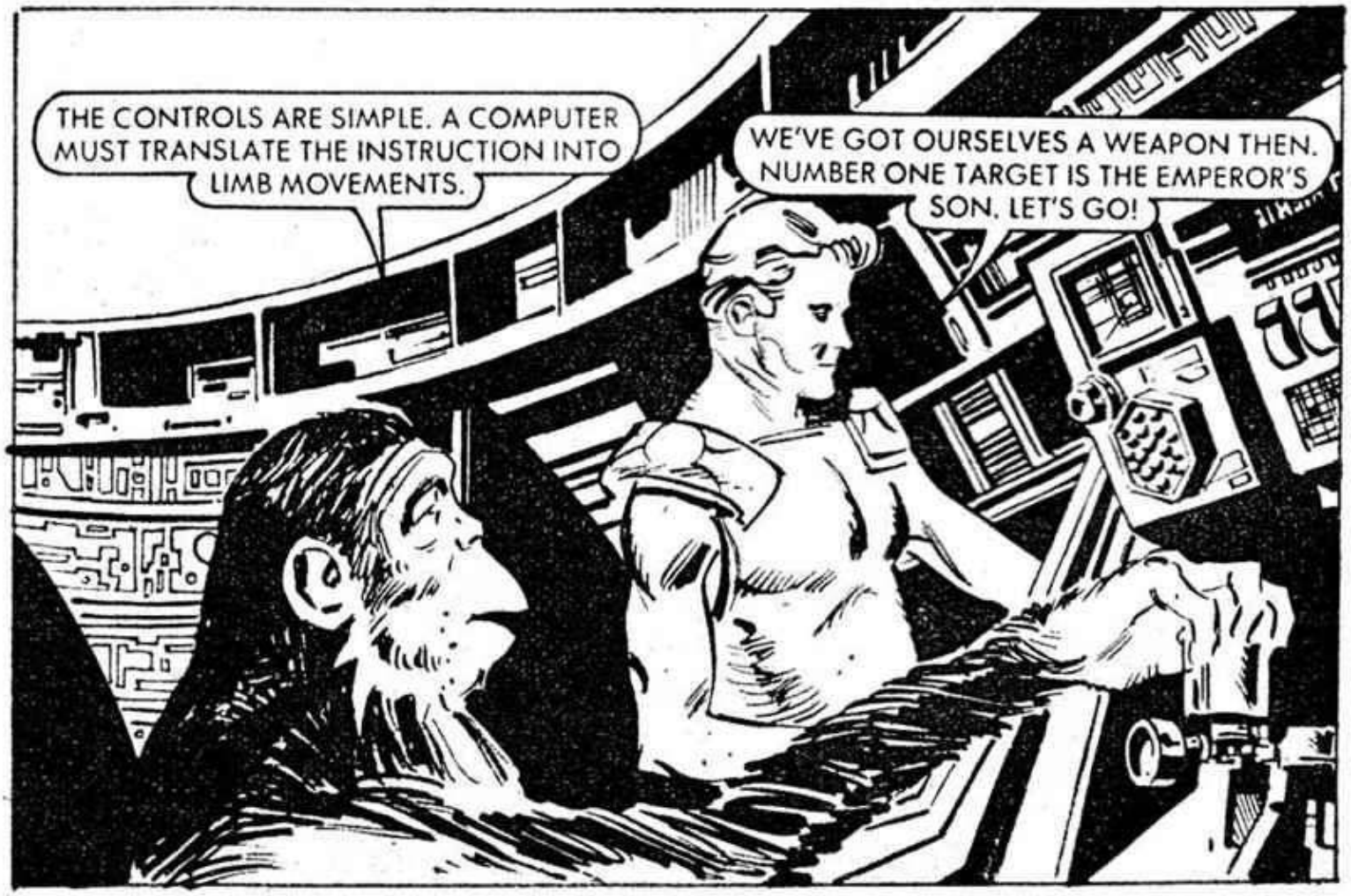
AN ALARM SIREN SUDDENLY SOUNDED THROUGHOUT THE SINISTER CITY.
SIRE! OUR SCANNERS SHOW AN UN-IDENTIFIED FLEET EMERGING FROM HYPER-SPACE INTO OUR STAR SYSTEM.
THE DEFENCES MUST BE ACTIVATED IMMEDIATELY!

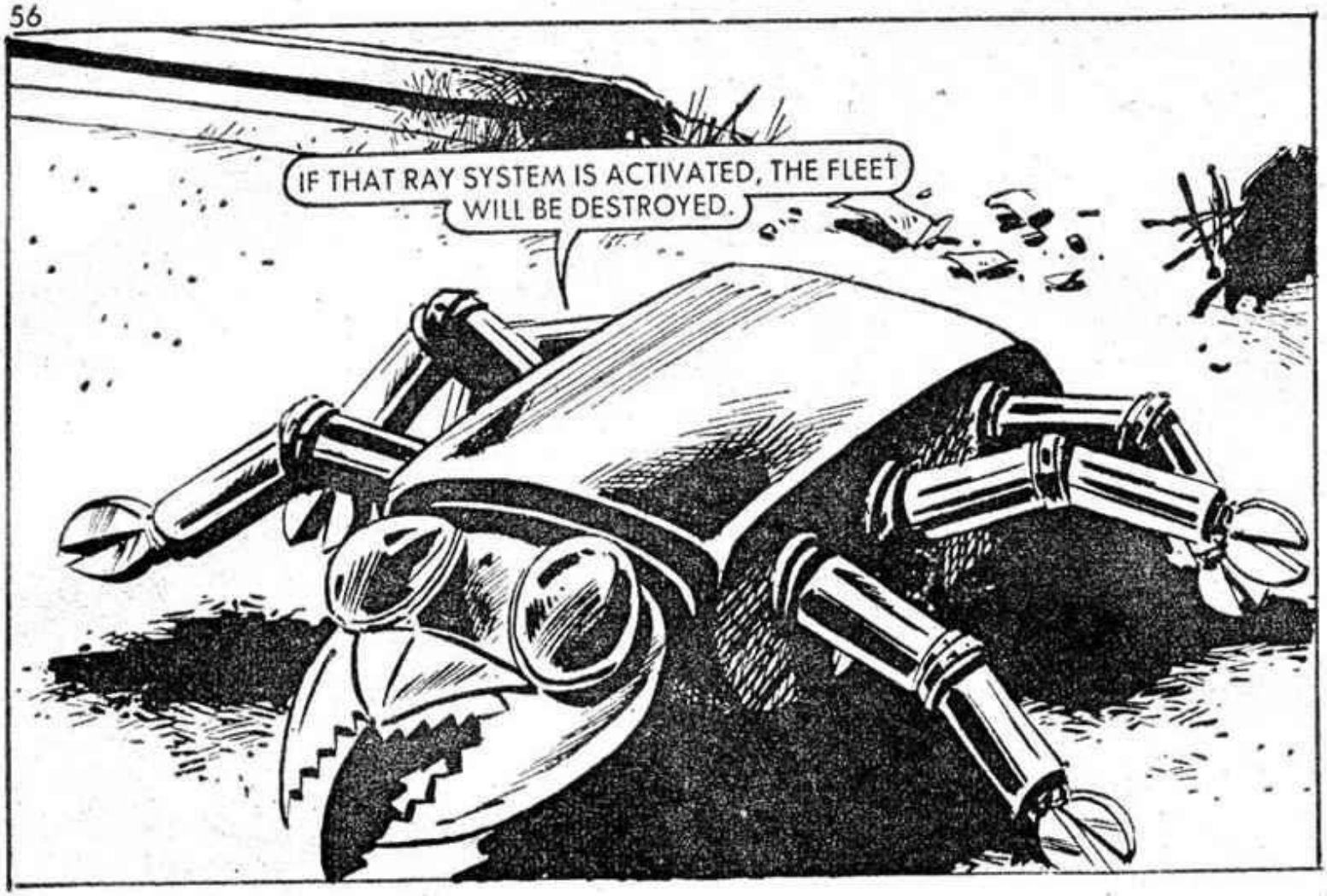

I MUST GET THE MASTER KEY TO THE RAY DEFENCE SYSTEM, AND USE IT AT ONCE.

HANG ON, REDD. I'LL TRY AND FREE YOU.
I'VE GOT NO CHOICE.

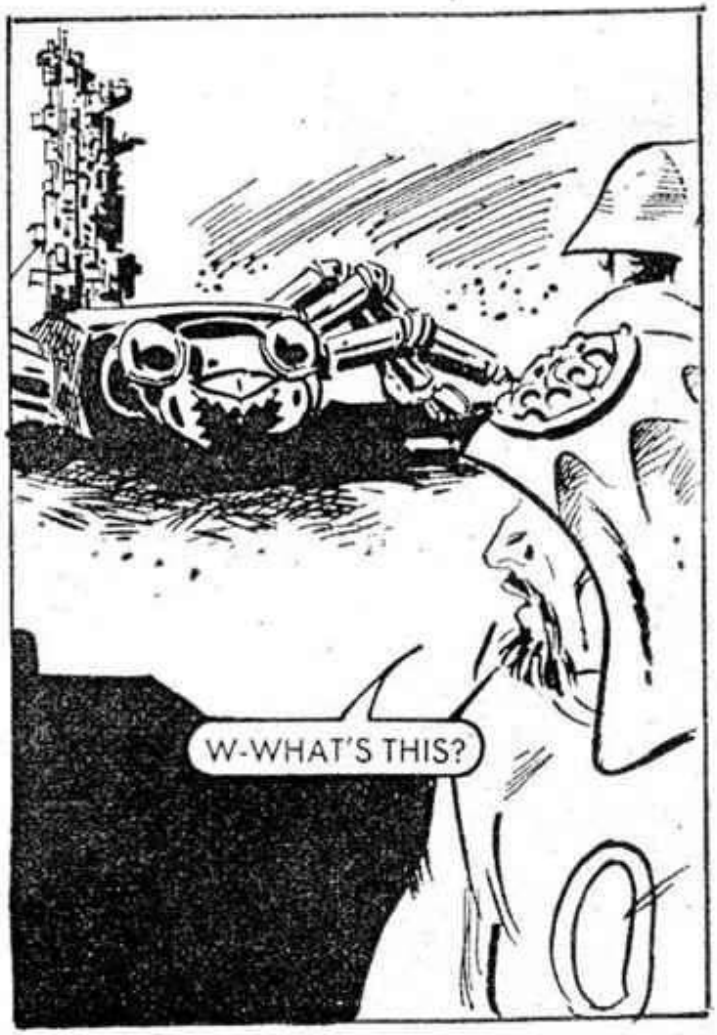
THERE SEEMS TO BE A CABIN OF SOME SORT INSIDE.
YOU'RE RIGHT. THERE ARE LEVERS THAT SHOULD RELEASE YOU.

REESOS SWITCHED ON MANUAL CONTROL AND RELEASED REDD.
WELL DONE REESOS. I'LL JOIN YOU INSIDE.


THE CONTROLS ARE SIMPLE. A COMPUTER MUST TRANSLATE THE INSTRUCTION INTO LIMB MOVEMENTS.
WE'VE GOT OURSELVES A WEAPON THEN. NUMBER ONE TARGET IS THE EMPEROR'S SON. LET'S GO!


IF THAT RAY SYSTEM IS ACTIVATED, THE FLEET WILL BE DESTROYED.

THE EMPEROR'S SON HAD OBTAINED THE MASTER KEY TO ACTIVATE THE DEATH RAY DEFENCE SYSTEM.
GET EVERY PROJECTOR MANNED, IT WILL TAKE ONLY MOMENTS FOR THE POWER TO BE KEYED ON.


W-WHAT'S THIS?

A CLAW RAISED THE GUARD HIGH IN THE AIR.

I'LL TIGHTEN THE GRIP UNTIL YOU TELL ME WHERE THE EMPEROR'S SON IS.
IN THE UNDERGROUND VAULT. BUT YOU WON'T STOP HIM NOW.

THE VAULT ENTRANCE LED INTO A LABYRINTH OF DUCTS AND PASSAGES.

I'VE GOT TO STOP HIM.

A LASER BEAM MISSED REDD BY INCHES.

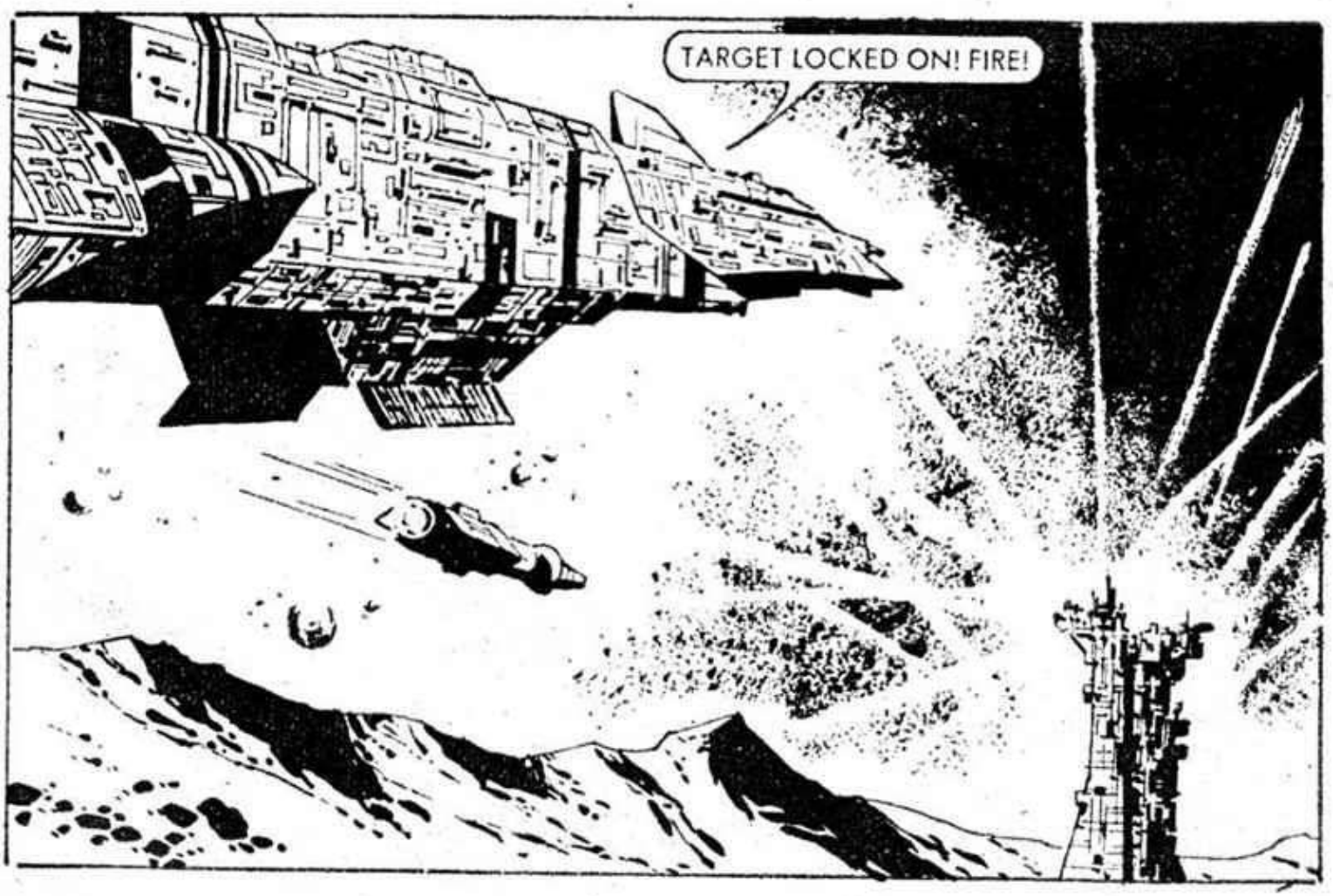
SO HE'S IN THAT ROOM UP AHEAD.

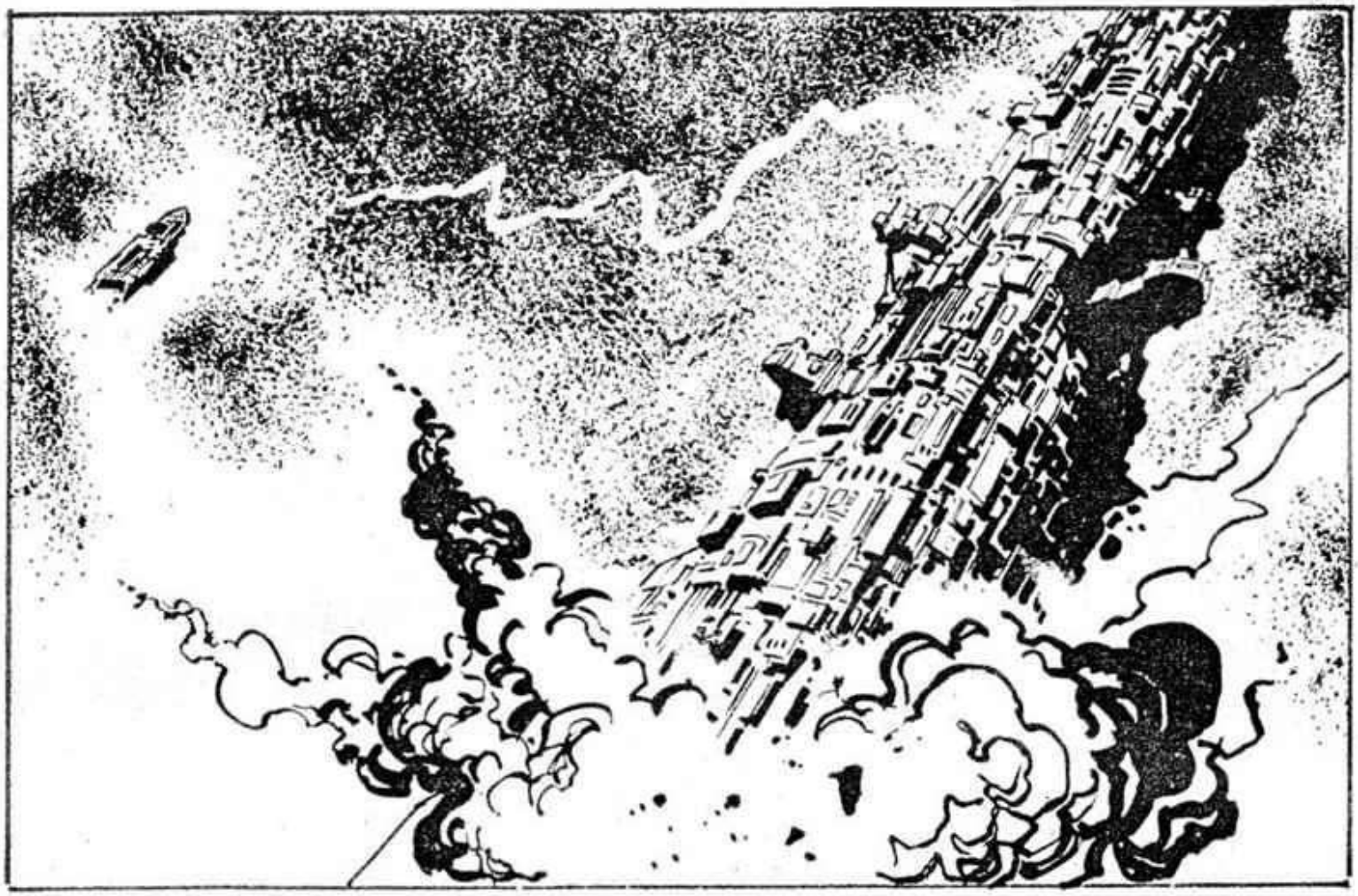
MADE IT! I'VE STOPPED HIM CLOSING THE DOOR.

I SHALL HAVE THE PLEASURE OF KILLING YOU . . . ONCE I HAVE KEYED ON THE RAY.

NOW MY BEAM PROJECTORS WILL DEMATERIALISE YOUR FUTILE FLEET.

VERNON DIDN'T HAVE TO GO TO EARTH. HE USED BEAM TRANSMISSION. VERNON'S INFORMATION WAS ALL EARTH RESISTANCE HAD NEEDED. ARMED WITH METHODS OF DEFEATING THE SINISTER, THE RESISTANCE HAD OVERTHROWN AND CAPTURED THEIR FLEET, WHICH WAS NOW POISED TO STRIKE AT SINISTER.
THAT'S THE TOWER!
TAKE THE TOWER OUT.


TARGET LOCKED ON! FIRE!



THE EARTH MISSILE RUPTURED THE MAIN POWER CABLE SERVING THE DEFENCE RAY SYSTEM. RAW POWER FED BACK ALONG THE MAZE OF FEEDER LINES TO ITS SOURCE.

MALFUNCTION! THE RAY POWER IS FEEDING BACK.

A CHAIN OF EXPLOSIONS RIPPED THE UNDERGROUND COMPLEX APART.
GOT TO GET OUT! I'LL BE BURNT OR BURIED ALIVE!

THE SINISTERS WERE UNABLE TO MOUNT ALTERNATIVE FIREPOWER.
WITHOUT THAT DEATH RAY WE ARE HELPLESS. THE TERRANS WILL DESTROY US!

AS THE EARTH FLEET SAW THE DEATH BEAMS FADE THEY MOVED IN FOR A BLANKET BOMBARDMENT. THEN REESOS MADE CONTACT.
IT'S REESOS. WHAT'S HAPPENING.

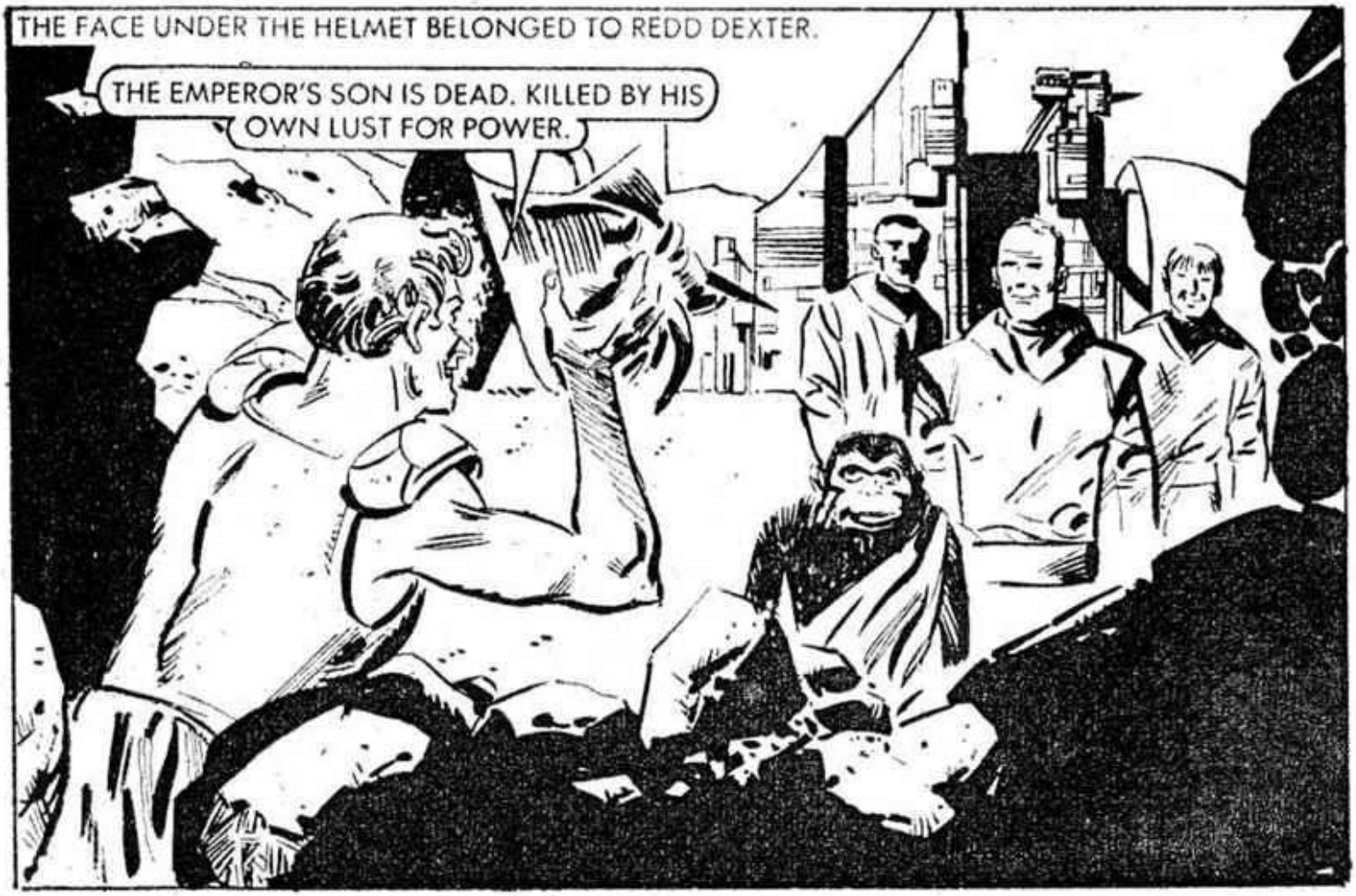
REESOS EXPLAINED THE SITUATION, AS THE FLAGSHIP PREPARED TO LAND.

THIS CONQUEST OF SINISTER WILL LIBERATE THE WHOLE EMPIRE. I CAN SOON GO HOME!

WHERE IS MY SON?

HE WENT INTO THE COMPLEX. REDD FOLLOWED HIM.

LOOK OUT! IT'S THE EMPEROR'S SON.


THE FACE UNDER THE HELMET BELONGED TO REDD DEXTER.
THE EMPEROR'S SON IS DEAD. KILLED BY HIS OWN LUST FOR POWER.

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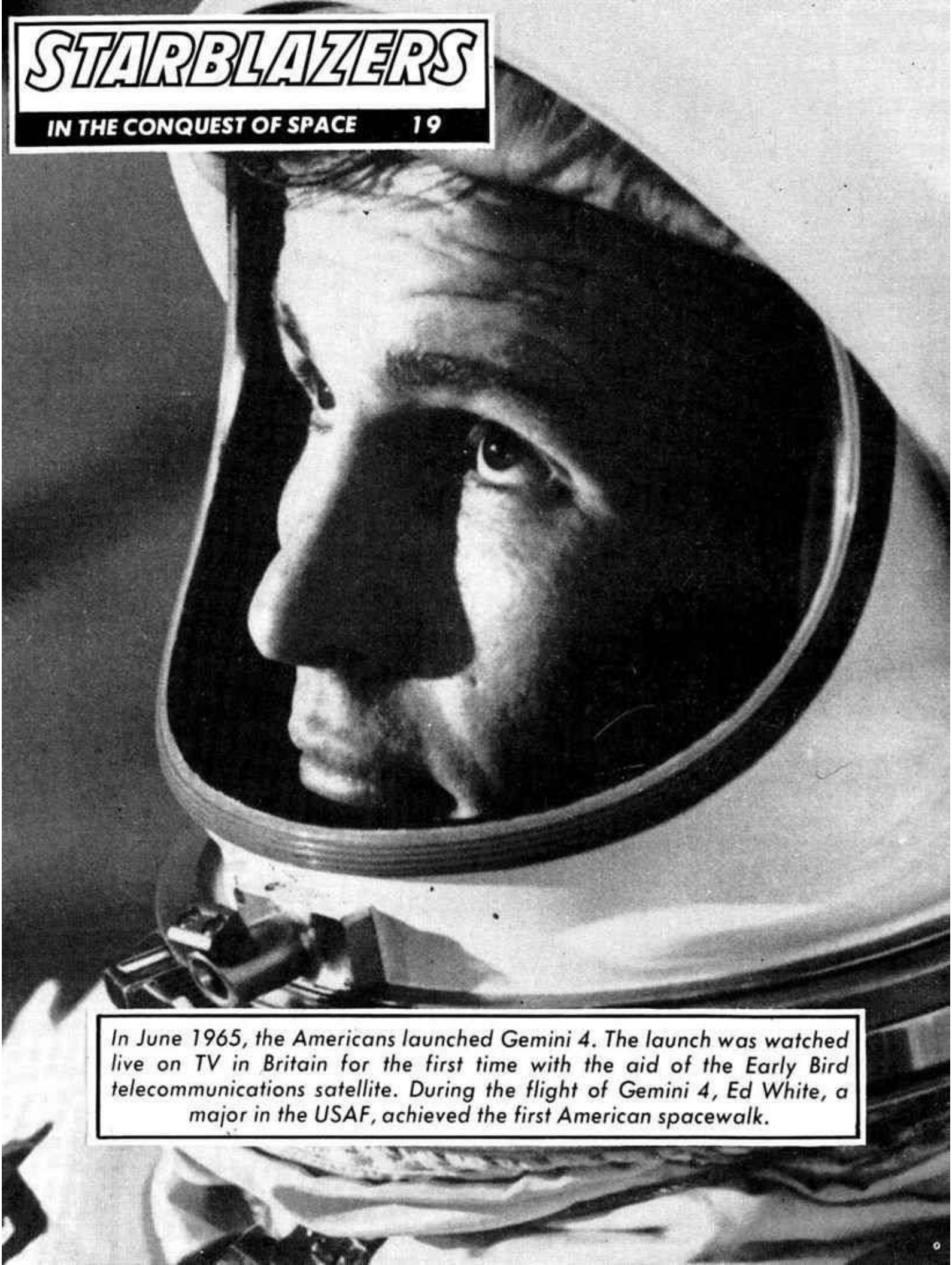
185 Fleet Street, London, EC4A 2HS. © D.C. THOMSON & CO. LTD., 1980.

NOW THAT YOU'VE READ THIS

DON'T FORGET THAT THERE'S ANOTHER ONE THIS MONTH

IT'S ON SALE IN YOUR NEWSAGENT'S NOW!



In June 1965, the Americans launched Gemini 4. The launch was watched live on TV in Britain for the first time with the aid of the Early Bird telecommunications satellite. During the flight of Gemini 4, Ed White, a major in the USAF, achieved the first American spacewalk.